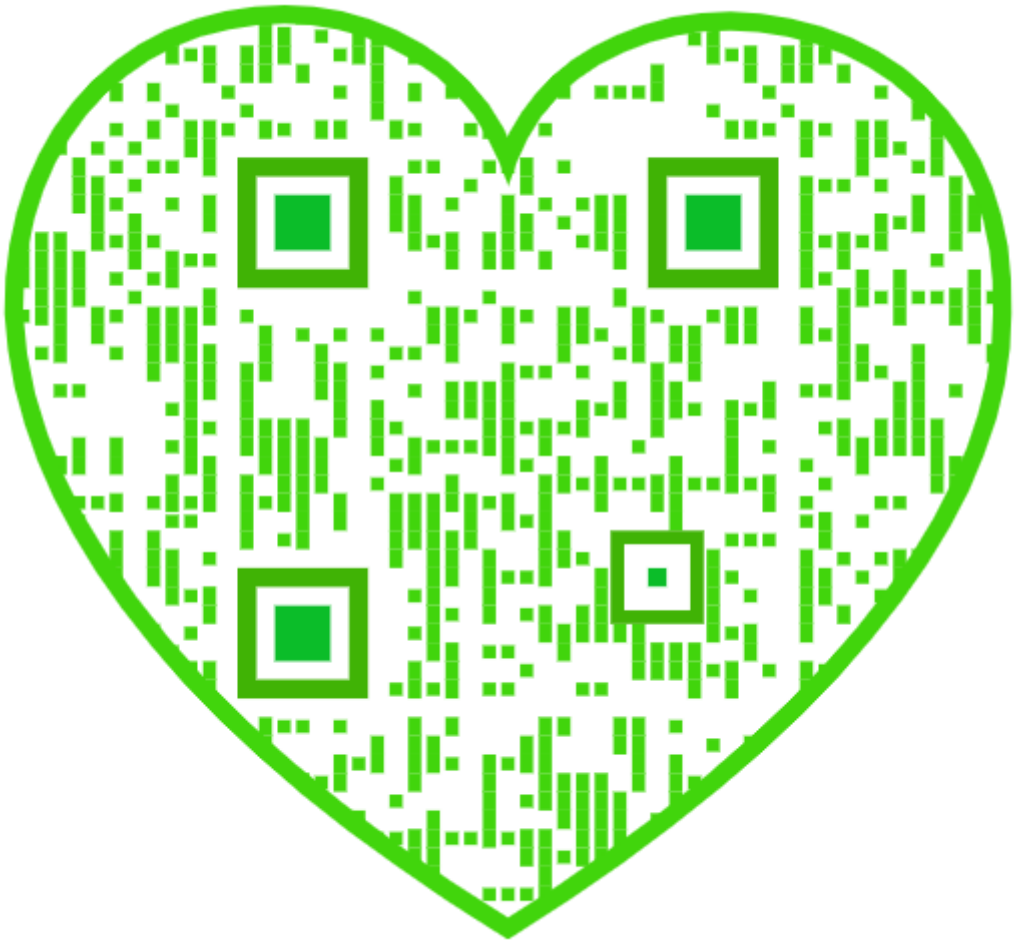
The Blue Andalusian

By

"Silver Dun."

Illustrated.



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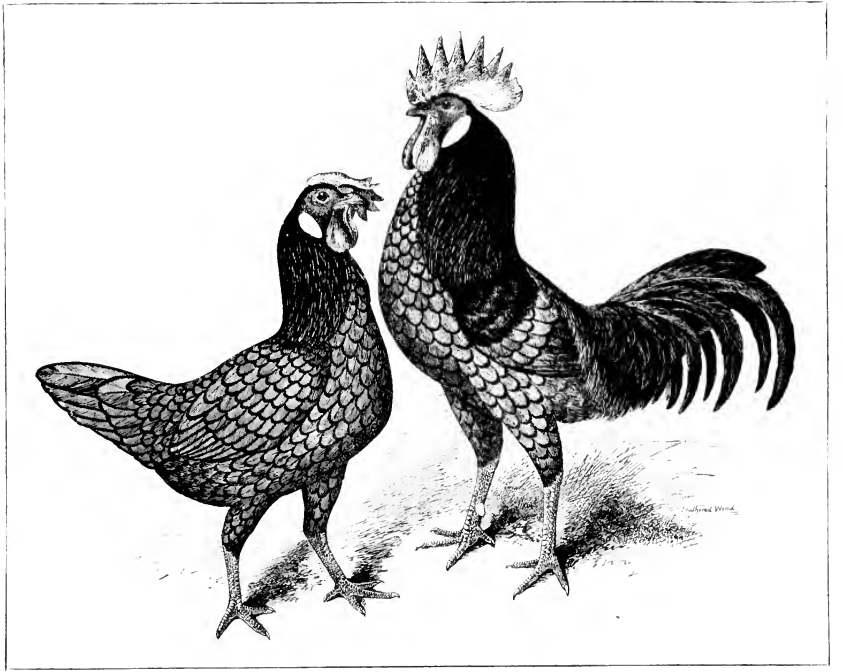

IDEAL ANDALUSIANS.

THE

BLUE ANDALUSIAN:

Its Breeding, Management, and Exhibition.

BY

"SILVER DUN."

ILLUSTRATED.

Second Edition.

WITH PREFACE BY THE REV. J. H. B. WOLLOCOMBE.

"THE FEATHERED WORLD,"
9 ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

I HARDLY think that any apology is necessary for the introduction of another monograph upon that handsome variety of domestic poultry the Blue Andalusian, for although the breed is now one of our old-established ones, the strict demands of the fancier upon the delicate ground colour and lacing have become so very much more pronounced in recent years, and so great an improvement is required upon what satisfied the most critical judges of even a dozen years ago, that the necessity for some work upon the subject, written up as near as may be to the requirements of the times, will, I trust, justify the publication of these pages.

Being fully aware that the value of a work of this kind would be considerably enhanced as a book of reference if it contained more than the simple experience of one individual, I have been only too pleased to avail myself of the kind assistance of several of the principal breeders of the variety, and must take this opportunity of thanking them for the information that they have so ungrudgingly afforded me.

While regretting that several once all-powerful names have now been almost entirely withdrawn from the ranks of the breeders of the Blue, it is yet satisfactory to know that the variety is still deriving benefit from the interest taken in it by many breeders prominent in the poultry fancy. To the former, the layers of the foundation stone of the modern Andalusian; to these latter breeders whose efforts will, I heartily trust, result in placing the variety upon a pinnacle of perfection almost undreamt of by those who have gone before; and to those future members of the Blue Brotherhood who are still to come, I beg to dedicate this little volume.

"SILVER DUN."

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

It is an eloquent testimony to the value of this little work, and also to the popularity of the variety with which it deals, that a Second Edition should be so soon called for.

In its revision "Silver Dun" has spared no pains, and his readers will find that he has supplied them with a thoroughly up-to-date treatise on the Blue Andalusian. In one respect, indeed, he is less fortunate now than he was when he was bringing out the First Edition. He then availed himself to the full of the ever ready help of our great leader, the late Captain Egerton Jones, whose ripe experience, keen eye for colour, exquisite taste, and sound judgment, combined with unbounded enthusiasm and untiring energy, have done so much towards making the Andalusian of to-day what it is. Captain Egerton Jones will be missed by many, and will be long remembered not only as one of the most skilful breeders and successful exhibitors of the day, but also as one of the most kind and generous of friends. Valuable as this work on the Andalusian is in itself, many of us feel that it has a special value now as containing, to a great extent, the views of that eminent fancier to whom we have long been accustomed to look for advice and guidance.

To "Silver Dun" himself the thanks of all Blue fanciers are due for his careful and exhaustive treatment of his subject. It is only a few who have the gift of writing in a style at once accurate and conversational, interesting and clear. He has it, and also a thorough knowledge of the variety he treats of, and, consequently, his book is both pleasant to read and useful to study. May he have an ever-increasing number of readers.

J. H. B. WOLLOCOMBE.

Lamerton Vicarage,
Tavistock, *17th April, 1897.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Although I cannot admit that the merits of this little work are by any means worthy of the very flattering but kindly meant expressions used by my friend Mr Wollocombe, yet I can fully endorse all that he says about the loss we have all sustained by the death of Captain Egerton Jones. Had it not been for his generously-given assistance I am afraid this work would never have been written; and in preparing this Second Edition for the press the reality of our loss has been brought home to me, so much so, that what might have been a pleasure in going over those paragraphs that were in a measure almost his own has been to me tinged with a sadness that I cannot express.

"SILVER DUN."

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THE BLUE ANDALUSIAN.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN.

Being of opinion that but little profit would arise from the discussion, it is not my intention in this article to re-open the old question of the origin of the Andalusian fowl further than just to glance at the material that has been so carefully gleaned by previous writers.

Looking into the antecedents of the Blue Andalusian, it would appear that from whatever source the first idea of the breed originated, from what country or from what district this particular blue-coloured fowl was derived, the Andalusian of to-day must be considered to be more or less of a made breed. From what evidence we have to go upon, we find that the first blues brought into notice were from somewhere in the south-western districts of England, and for all practical purposes that may therefore be looked upon as the birthplace of the Andalusian.

I have no doubt in my own mind, however, that birds of a similar colour, and perhaps type, to these originals, could have been met with all over the country, had there been the educated fancier's eye on the look-out for novelties. In proof of this I need only point out the frequency with which birds of a *similar* appearance are constantly cropping up in the multitudinous crosses of the modern farmyard. I know of a case in point under my own observation. A friend of mine bought two or three clutches of chickens that had been bred in a yard which contained dark Brahmas and black Spanish running together indiscriminately, and it was really astonishing the number of these chicks which were of an unmistakably blue colour. As I did not follow the development of this lot to maturity, I cannot say how they turned out, nor do I expect that they produced anything remarkable in the way of blue colouring; but I remember a letter of Mr W. Cook's, published a few years ago, in which he stated that he knew of a case in which a similar cross produced a cockerel which actually won in a class for Andalusians, and common report has it that a certain hen that had done a lot of winning, possessed no purer blood than that heterogeneous compound known as the barn-door fowl. It must not be forgotten that in days gone by, if we

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are to judge by the plate produced in Mr Lewis Wright's first edition, lacing was almost absent from the first Andalusians, and therefore it was a very much easier thing for a recently cross-bred bird to creep into the prize money than it would be now, when lacing is—or rather, I should say, *ought* to be—the first point to be looked for in a typical Andalusian.

So far as I understand, the Andalusian was first brought into prominence through the importation into this country of a blue variety of fowl having certain peculiar characteristics of its own; and as this so-called first importation of Andalusians were of a more "gamey" type than the breed as we know it now is, it was upon its arrival looked upon as something distinct, although there were, even at that time, numerous flocks of birds of a similar colour roaming about the fields of Devon. Miss May Arnold has, I notice, spoken of these birds of the soil as being blue Minorcas, and as they were found in what may be called the home of the Minorca, I think Miss Arnold may be about right in supposing that they were an offshoot from pure Minorca parentage. I hardly hold with that lady, however, in maintaining that it is only unmixed descendants of the imported birds that can fairly claim to be called the true Andalusians. If the evidence of our eyes is of any weight, I should say that nine-tenths of the prize-winners of to-day have quite as much, and perhaps too much, of the Minorca type about them, and I think that it is only too likely that most breeders of that day would indiscriminately use the new blood to cross with what they possessed. The imported blue might have been clearer in colour than obtained in a blue Minorca, and as such would be used to improve the colouring; but I think that the cross, whatever it did for colour and lacing, left undeniable traces of the Minorca parentage in an alteration in the head points, a greater size of body, and other attributes of the south-country bird. There is no question but that a direct Minorca cross has been made within recent years, with certainly *some* advantage to the variety, but I have treated this matter more fully in a later chapter.

I do not intend to go further into the question of the derivation of the Andalusian, as so much of what particulars we have regarding its origin can at best only be considered as conjecture. Nor do I think that whether the so-called Gamey type imported bird or the blue Minorca can claim to have the greatest share in the production of this, one of the handsomest varieties of the day, should influence our minds in the slightest degree as to what value should now be placed upon each point in the standard of perfection; bearing in mind, however, that there are certain advantages to be derived by a newer breed, if the compilers of the standard up to which it is desirable it should be bred will help to widen as much as possible—without endangering the utility or beauty of the breed under their care—the breach of difference that should lie between it and all other varieties to a greater or less degree.

CHAPTER II.

UTILITY.

THE economical value of the Andalusian is now so well known that it is hardly necessary to dwell very much upon this point, but there is one thing to be said in its favour which can be applied to very few varieties, in that it is one of the very best fowls for confinement; indeed, taking everything into consideration, I think it might fairly be said to be the best-known variety for this purpose. It is easily kept within bounds, a six-foot fence being an obstacle that only very rarely will the most flighty Andalusian surmount.

Then, as an egg producer, it is second to none. I have certainly found it to be a bird with a very fair appetite; but, making every allowance for this, its proportionate return in eggs is eminently satisfactory. It is a non-sitter, which may or may not be an advantage; but in these days of almost perfect artificial incubation, this is generally an advantage rather than otherwise.

As a table bird the dark legs may militate somewhat against the Andalusian, but as it is a beautifully white fleshed bird, and, as when kept in vigorous condition it develops plenty of breast, it must always be looked upon, even from this point of view, as a variety of the first class.

I have said that it is a variety particularly suited for confinement. By this I mean that under such conditions it will not only lay well, and make good return on outlay, but that it will—provided, of course, that it is properly looked after—keep itself in presentable condition, a state of things that does not always obtain in so many other varieties that I have come across when kept in confinement. This is a statement easily made, and may not appear of much moment, but I have seen so many instances of wretched specimens of the domestic fowl kept in small runs that were such a terrible eyesore, that to come across a variety that remains a picture under such conditions is to have discovered a treasure. My own runs are only small—miserably small they would appear to some—and yet I have been frequently complimented by visitors upon the really brilliant appearance of their occupants. While speaking of the value of the Andalusian as a bird suitable for a limited range, I may be excused if I give a quotation from an article I wrote several years ago for a contemporary:—"Did I dare to express an opinion upon the relative merits of the Minorca and the Andalusian, I should say that the former only comes off a very poor second. Unfortunately for the value of my opinions, my experience of the two breeds does not extend over very many seasons, and, as regards my luck with them,

I must confess that I found that cockerels of both varieties under my care failed wretchedly in the production of *tails*—rarely anything else but ragged apologies. In all other respects the Andalusian pleased me immensely. I found it a rather better layer, a smaller eater, and a superior table fowl, but as I did not kill many, that may not prove much. So much for them from a utilitarian point of view. As birds for the fancier, the colour points of the Andalusian placed it far ahead. There is something peculiarly agreeable and seductive in breeding for the delicately laced edges to the blue ground of the feathers, while in the other fancy points it is quite as difficult, if not more so, to get good head points on the Andalusian as it is on the Minorca."

These words were written some years ago, and were referring to some blues I had kept in days gone by. I can still hold by most of what I then wrote, with the exception of the ragged growth of the tail. Whether an intervening experience in breeding the black Hamburgh, a variety that is of no use whatever without its gloriously flowing tail, or whether the nature of the Andalusian has changed or not in the ten or a dozen years between my first attempt with blues and my taking up with them a second time, I can hardly say, but I do not now find any difficulty in producing as good a tail as can be wished for, excepting that I cannot get the *breadth* of feather in the sickles and tail coverts that I should prefer. I notice that Mr Lewis Wright, and also Mr Verrey, have stated that Andalusians, when confined, are particularly subject to the disgusting habit of feather eating. Mrs Blacket Gill, in a letter written some two or three years ago, also supports the statement, but I can hardly accept it as a serious indictment against the variety. I do not doubt for a moment that the writers have possessed individuals of the breed which have, perhaps, under great temptation, given way to so pernicious a fault, but this proves nothing against the *variety*. I maintain that there is not a pure breed of poultry under the sun—not to speak of mongrels—that will not, at certain times and under certain conditions, give way in a moment of weakness, and so throw upon every member of their family the disgrace of being subject to feather eating. Fowls are uncommonly like human beings in this respect—that to be kept out of mischief they must be kept employed. Give them something to do, something to scratch in—anything, in fact, that will help them to while away the tedious hours between meal times.

To those whose fortune it is to possess an unlimited range, I can with equal confidence recommend the breed. For the farmer, one of the chief requisites of a paying fowl is that it must be a good forager. Now, an Andalusian is the very essence of activity; it is the very last bird in the world to stand lazily about a farmyard when there are worms and insects to be had for the picking in the fields around, and it must be a rock-bound, barren, and profitless soil that will not provide this variety with a good meal during the daytime. As I have said before, they have a good

appetite, and by no means a delicate one, but they will make a good return for value received, and it rests with the owner to take care not to overdo the business at feeding time.

In the eyes of the fancier the Andalusian possesses one fault, and I am sorry to say a very serious one—they *do not breed true to colour*. Taking an average of different strains, I think I am not far out in saying that out of a given number of chickens hatched from pure blue pareuts, nearly fifty per cent. will be either black or white, and only the remainder blue. This is certainly dishearten-ing. It is difficult enough, with the weather we are accustomed to in this country, to hatch and rear our chickens in the early months of the year; how much more so is it annoying when you can only look upon half your hatchings as being your foundation to select from? But there is no cloud without a silver lining, and such easily picked out wastrels as the blacks and whites may be made to serve a useful purpose. In my own case, as I only keep black Hamburghs and Andalusians, I am perforce compelled to procure broody hens to act as sitters and nurses—not being always at home to secure the full benefits of incubators and artificial rearers—and I simply make arrangements with those from whom I borrow the sitting hens to give in return all the blacks and whites which were hatched out by them. As I return the hen with her brood of off colours at about a mouth old, and an average of about four chicks per hen, I do not think the lender makes a bad thing out of it, and if he is satisfied I am. Should the breeder, however, in addition to his Andalusians, keep a variety that will sit, he need not kill off the off colours on being hatched, as I have heard is frequently done, for if he does not care to give them away at once, we have in *The Feathered World* of 1st June, 1894, a letter from a French corre-spondent, in which, speaking of a custom in that country of killing chickens for the table at an unusually early age, the writer says:—"They are fed exclusively on barley meal, mixed with milk or whey, and killed at five or six weeks old. When dressed for the table exactly in the same way as ordinary fowls they are like a large fat pigeon; the flesh is white, juicy, and most delicious. In the restaurants of Paris this dish is served under the name of *Poussin en cocotte*. The *cocotte* is a saucepan of brown earth with a cover, in which the *petits poussins* are stewed with a piece of fresh butter, pepper, and salt. When the little 'innocent' is nicely browned it is brought on to the table in a saucepan, and generally new peas are served with it; more generally still this nice and dainty little dish is charged five, six, or seven francs." I have not tried this recipe myself, and I am afraid I am rather too soft-hearted to make the experiment; but he who runs may read, and it is perhaps well worth trying with such promising material as the Andalusian breeder can produce in abundance.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

SHAPE, SIZE, ETC.—In considering the question of the shape of the Andalusian we are thrown into the shadow of all the old arguments that have been used about the origin of the breed. But all we have to consider is, What is the shape we have to breed up to? Which type gives us the handsomest-looking bird? Questions of offal, breast meat, etc., need not be considered here, as, looking at the blue from the fancier's point of view, we want beauty of outline in the first place. A typical specimen in my eyes would partake of certain points of the Minorca thrown upon others of the Game. The type of head I shall consider in another place, but I would have it large and deep, and placed upon a long yet muscular neck, well covered with a wealth of hackle;* this placed upon broad and well rounded shoulders, full, rounded breast, with the back sloping down to the tail; wings large, and carried well up; the whole body having a wedge shape, broad and deep in the front, and tapering behind. The saddle hackle, however, must be full and flowing, well covering the tips of the wings and the set on of the tail. The tail itself should leave the body at about a right, or nearly an obtuse, angle to the back—not at an *acute* angle, which is so frequently seen—and be carried rather low than otherwise, but still well away from the ground, and, though not fan shaped, yet at the same time sufficiently displayed to show the side hangers or coverts. These latter should, with the sickles, be well arched, and the whole of the feathers of the tail as *broad* as it is possible to get them.

A wry tail is so very conspicuous that it needs no description, and in any breed is an abomination, but there is one good thing to be said about the tail of the Andalusian, and that is that it is generally straight. It is not often you come across a wry tailed specimen; but squirrel tails are still too frequent, and, on this account, I much prefer a tail carried, as I have said, *rather* low than otherwise. I should be glad to see the time when we can breed the blue with large, broader feathered, and more flowing tails than we have up to now; but I suppose the day will come, and we must wait in patience, a really broad feathered tail having a peculiar attractiveness of its own that has only to be seen to be admired.

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* It is as well to mention here how important in the eyes of most judges is a fully flowing and straight falling hackle. Any scantiness in it is looked upon as a very serious fault. while a twisted hackle, or one that lies split down the back and dropping with the tips reversed on the shoulder, is considered almost as a fatal defect.

The Andalusian should have more length of leg than the Minorca. Quite as massive on the shank, it should not be so square built in body, show more daylight underneath, and display the thighs standing well and distinctly out from the hips.

For bulk, the blue is found more frequently inferior to the Minorca, standing taller, but not having the mass of body of the latter variety. This is not as it should be, and size must be made a most important point. Here and there we come across perfect giants among the blue hens, and every use must be made of them to aid in improving the general size of the breed.

The above description is intended to apply to the cock, but with the usual sexual differences, it may be taken as applying equally well to the hen. In particular, the hen must carry her tail closed up, as it were, a spreading fan-shaped tail being extremely ugly. A fair average weight of a good male bird should be over 7 lbs. and the hen over 4 lbs., but take this as a minimum, and get them as much bigger—not fatter, please—as possible.

CARRIAGE AND STYLE.—But, while paying every attention to the massiveness of your birds, do not overlook their carriage and style. A big, heavy-boned bird of clumsy carriage, although of more value than a smaller and neater one, loses many of its chances simply through this ungainliness. The longer neck, carried well back, and the length of leg, give the Andalusian a more sprightly appearance than is usual with the more clumsily built Minorca, and from an economical view only, a lively cockerel is always an advantage, the pullets bred from such a sire being invariably better layers than are those sired by one of a slow moving and more phlegmatic temperament.

HEAD POINTS.*—The head itself should be large in proportion to the size of the body, with a strong, stout beak, dark horn in colour; the eye to be bold looking, of a brilliant reddish brown colour. The comb must be single, of *moderate size*, evenly serrated and free from side sprigs or thumb marks. A perfect comb is a rarity, but I think we are getting very near to it, and I am in hopes that if the Minorca cross be kept out for good, a cross which has brought us combs that are ugly, coarse, and top heavy, we are within very measurable reach of the day when good combs will be the rule. Mr Thos. Lambert, from whose yard, I believe I am right in stating, nearly all the leading strains of blues have descended, gives me to understand that, while quite appreciating the wonderful advance the hens have in every respect made during the last ten years or so, he considers that we cannot congratulate ourselves so much upon the other sex. As he puts it, nearly all the present-day judges cannot get past the head, and although he quite agrees with me that colour and lacing must be considered far above everything else, yet this weakness of the judges for a good headed cockerel must not be lost

* I think it due to Mr Lydon to say that in drawing the rough sketch for the ideals, I made the comb of the hen rather larger than I intended, and the wattles too long, and not sufficiently rounded.

sight of, and this point should not be allowed to degenerate, which he thinks *it has*. While agreeing with Mr Lambert as to the attractiveness of a good head, I think he rather overlooks the generally accepted position, that judges should, in their decisions, abide by the ideal of the breeders (I will not here say "the club standard," because as it stands it is somewhat of a farce), and not the breeders attempt to produce birds that shall be the ideal of the judges. This latter proceeding, if I may be allowed to say it, savours too much of the deck-sweeper to be either popular or praiseworthy. The comb should be well set upon the head, standing upon a firm, thick basis, but as its general substance must be thin—not too much so as to interfere with stability—this heavy base must taper off sharply upwards. The surface formations of the comb on either side *must match*—that is to say, that although a certain amount of wrinkling is allowable on each side of the front portion of the comb, such wrinkling must be as slight as possible, and be uniform on either side. A much too frequent fault in what is often otherwise a good comb is a thumb mark. This is a depression on one side as though the thumb had been pressed against it, matched by a bulge on the other face. The tendency of such faulty combs is to tilt slightly over, however firmly they may be fixed on their base, and most lop combs on examination will be found to have this same defect.

Rising straight from the *middle* of the upper mandible, the comb should then, in a series of about five or six *wide* and *deep* serrations, curve gradually over to the back. It is not considered absolutely necessary that the serrations should be continued right to the very back of the comb, although a perfect comb would be so shaped, but each serration must be distinctly and uniformly graduated, the largest in the centre, and lessening to the front and back. The spikes must in every case be sharp and well defined, and perfectly upright; a semi-serration, or, as it is sometimes erroneously called, a double serration, is an ugly fault, as also is irregularity in the graduation. Too many serrations are unsightly, and in a sense faulty, as, if the spike is too narrow at the base, it has a strong tendency to lie over at the tip. Side sprigs, as the small projections that sometimes grow out at the sides of the comb are called, are also very objectionable, as is also a superabundance of the hindmost lobe of the comb. This should be firmly set on, and set perpendicularly straight, not curved up where it nears the neck. This ugly curvature very often takes place when there is too much of the comb behind. In a perfect comb an almost straight line may be drawn from the angle where it joins the head, along the underside to the extreme back reach; or such line may dip slightly, following the curve of the head; but at the same time it must keep well away from the feathers, as a comb falling too low is extremely unsightly. The illustration given in Mr Wright's book of Mr Leworthy's Andalusian gives a comb showing too much daylight below at the back, such being considered faulty to-day; but still it is hardly a *serious* defect, provided it is not cut away too much.

If anything, a more serious fault, and one more easily discerned than any of the above, is a twisted comb. This fault occurs at the front, and is generally due to a flabbiness or weakness of substance in the anterior portion of the comb. Where it occurs it is more easily detected by standing directly in front of the bird and looking at it *vis-à-vis*. It will then be seen that the front, instead of making a perpendicular line from the base to the tip, is twisted out of the straight line, and hangs loosely somewhat to either side. When this occurs in an adult I do not know of any fair means by which it can be put right, but a young cockerel of from three to four months old need not be discarded on account of showing traces of a twist, as with the full development of the comb, and more flesh being put on at the back, the posterior weight will tend to pull the comb down at the back and straighten out any slight twist that should have shown itself at the front.

The colour of the comb must, of course, be a brilliant red, not quite of the *glossy* brightness that is sometimes seen on the Hamburgh's comb, and the surface of it be of a minute granulated texture, not by any means with the coarse gritty look of the Minorca's. This is rather an important point, and as the largest combs are generally associated with the rougher texture the fault is emphasised. It is impossible to give in actual inches the size either in length or height that a perfect comb should be, but let it be well understood that a *large* comb is not desirable, and that a *small* one is even less so. If you can picture to yourself the happy medium, then also remember that the texture of the comb should also be of this medium nature, the finer the granulations the better, provided it does not degenerate into smooth glossiness. I may point out an advantage in the insistence of this minute granulation:—Any clean cut wound upon such a surface will invariably upon healing leave the place of a brighter appearance than the original ground, thus any attempt at cutting and faking is all the more likely to be discovered. The comb of the Hamburgh is usually of this brighter character, and consequently the amount of undetected cutting and carving that it has undergone is something frightful to think of, and let breeders of the blue congratulate themselves that there is so little scope for the artist in *improving* the breed of their adoption.

The comb of the hen differs not so much from that of the cock in formation as in carriage. It is slightly thinner in substance, but otherwise should resemble that of the male bird in shape, particularly in evenness and sharpness of serration. Instead of being carried erect, however, it should fall gracefully over to one side of the face, which side being immaterial. The manner of carrying the comb mostly preferred is when it rises slightly and leans to just a slight degree to one side, then in a bold curve goes right over to the other, and there hangs down, not so low, however, as to cover the eye. Such combs as these are generally safe to breed from, and are likely to produce cockerels having combs well set up. There are certain hens the combs upon which are of a flabby

nature, and fall either directly over and down one side of the face, like the mane of a horse, or fall flat to one side, and then as flat back again over all, and lie on the top of the head in a double fold. Either kind is considered as faulty, and are by no means pretty or attractive. Some hens, again, have combs carried straight and erect, as in the male bird, and, though of no use for exhibition, they may be used in the breeding pen, that is, if the comb is of good quality and perfect in its serrations, and, indeed, the pen is all the more complete in containing such a hen, as she tends to keep up the firmness and stamina of the combs in the male progeny.*

As will be understood from the way the hen's comb falls, such faults as thumb mark and twist can hardly be recognised in that sex; so that it is very important that great efforts should be made to procure a cockerel to breed from whose comb is entirely free from either defect, and, in fact, whatever allowances we may make for defective combs in the hens, we must steel ourselves to allow little or no latitude in those of the other sex.

THE FACE.—A perfectly sound, bright cherry red face, free from white and from feathers, is a great beauty in the breed, and a point worth certain sacrifices to obtain, but my own opinions on the subject of white face are, I am inclined to think, considered by certain friends of mine as heretical. It is an ugly fault, I grant, and no one would be better pleased than myself to see it eradicated permanently from the Andalusian. It is by the present standard of perfection of the club looked upon as a *disqualification*—a rather drastic rule, as I will endeavour to show. When the face is entirely white, or nearly so, I would let the disqualification hold good, but for a white speck or two—and this, I opine, would be included in the phrase "face not red," among the list of disqualifications—I would simply deduct a certain number of points to be agreed upon. And for why? It is the experience of most breeders that the lighter and truer blue birds are most subject to this defect, and consequently that a dark bird is rarely troubled with it. On this finding, therefore, there has been a tendency to over-introduce dark crosses, and in times gone by—would that they were in the far distant past!—the Minorca has been recklessly introduced to emphasise the dark cross, and while it may have helped to dish the white face, it has brought in evils, perhaps more serious, that will take more time to root out than would the white face itself have been got rid of by the more rational method of judicious selection.

There is hardly any other fault in the Andalusian that is so sore a temptation to the *faker* to remove as this. To attempt to improve the comb is, as I have said before, hardly worth the risk of

* All breeders, however, I must admit, do not care about these erect combed hens for breeding purposes, in fact, the Rev. J. H. B. Wollocombe says:—"My experience of breeding from a hen with an upright comb is, that she does not improve the combs of the cockerels and spoils the combs of the pullets, and, therefore, for cockerel breeding I should prefer the daughter of a good combed male bird rather than a hen with an erect comb."

detection, though probably many a bird is passed by the judge for a suspicious mark thereon which is really as honest as the day. A few white specks upon the face, however, can, it is said, be easily removed by the aid of the tweezers, and I have heard of more pronounced cases of the failing being considerably improved by the help of well applied sandpaper or acid. If, therefore, a bird should in the show pen show a mere *speck* or two of the objectionable tint upon an otherwise perfect ground, is it not rather to be accepted as proof, not so much that the bird is faulty, but that he is shown by an honest exhibitor?

This, then, is my argument: that the compilers of the standard of perfection of the Andalusian Club, by penalising a speck or two of white on an otherwise sound face, are putting a premium upon dishonest exhibition; whereas did they in such a case content themselves with simply deducting a to be agreed upon number of points for the blemish, more birds would be shown honestly and take their fair chance in comparison.

The distinction between *pale face* and white in face is frequently overlooked. Pale face properly so called is that in which the skin of the face is of a pale, bloodless, pinkish colour, not white, and may be due to several causes. It may be inherent and due to a natural lack of vigour. It may be due to a temporary indisposition, or the cause may be injudicious over-showing. If the first be the cause it is sometimes almost impossible to get rid of it, as in such cases it generally comes on as the bird gets old; but if it is due to a slight illness, the usual remedial measures must be taken, and if the patient has not had much of a flesh diet, see that a proper amount is supplied, and at the same time administer iron in one or other of its numerous forms. To repair the evil consequences of over-showing is to abstain from showing the bird further, give it a rest, and assist Nature in pulling the patient together again by a course of judicious feeding, plenty of fresh air, a fresh grass run if possible, and a more natural life for it than the exciting existence enjoyed (?) by the show specimen.

White face differs from the foregoing in that only in very bad cases does it affect the whole of the facial surface; on the contrary, the fault is frequently seen in birds that are particularly red upon such portions of the face where the blemish has not encroached. It generally shows itself in a few white or bluish specks, well within the margin of the red substance and near to the lobe, running close up to the eye in some cases. With age these few white specks are almost certain to spread and cover a considerable portion of the face, and consequently become very unsightly. I recollect some years ago seeing in the possession of Mr W. H. Smith, of Hamburgh fame, a four year old black Hamburgh cock that was the direct progenitor of perhaps more cup winners than any bird of his time, and he was as white in face as any Spanish fowl; in fact, he had no red left of any moment. He had been used freely for three years in the breeding pen, and but an inconsiderable few of his progeny had

inherited the blemish of their father. As a cockerel he had been sound enough, the fault only appearing as he got older; so that if you should purchase a cockerel apparently as sound in face as possible, it is no proof that he has not got the taint in his blood to develop later in life.

LOBE.—No very great importance is attached to the lobe of the Andalusian; not that this is correct, but a certain amount of laxity seems to obtain in ideas of what a lobe should be. Provided it is of moderate size, free from red stains, smooth of surface, and not folded, no further notice is taken of what is its shape, and of what quality is the substance. I am of opinion that this looseness is due to, or perhaps it is only the cause of, the standard of perfection showing no firmness on the point. It says: "Deaf ears—medium (?) smooth, flat, fitting close to head, and free from wrinkles." The note of interrogation is my own. I suppose it refers to size, but it really means nothing. There is no mention here at all of *shape*. Mr Verrey gives a far better description of what a lobe should be like, but, strange to say, he also makes no mention of shape. From this it might be inferred that shape is of no importance whatever. With this conclusion, however, I beg to differ. I should be sorry to see the lobe brought into the prominence it is in the Hamburgh varieties, as when all is said and done, it can only be considered as a point of secondary importance, but it should not be allowed to lapse further than that.

It is, I believe, roughly understood that the lobe of the Andalusian should, like that of the Minorca, be almond-shaped, or somewhat of an elongated egg-shape, with the broad end uppermost. It is not often such a lobe is seen in perfection; but on one occasion I saw an Andalusian cockerel, exhibited by Mr Butterfield, at Keighley, which had a lobe very much after this pattern, and of wonderful texture and purity, and yet this lobe did not altogether satisfy the critics present. I am of opinion that the standard of perfection would be more complete if it spoke more decidedly upon the point, and stated, if I might suggest, that the lobe of the cockerel must be shaped something like a long and *narrow* filbert nut, if anything wider at the top than at the bottom, but this not of importance. The lobe of the hen should also be of a similar shape, but of course smaller in size. By going in for *narrow* lobes, as against the broad rounder ones so frequently seen, we should be helping to stamp out white face, as it is the birds having the big lobes that show the defect most usually.

It goes without saying that in colour the lobe must be perfectly white, without the slightest suspicion of red or even of a blushed tint. In quality and texture it must be fine, thin, kid-like, free from wrinkles or creases, without any folds whatever, equal in substance throughout, and spread down well against the head.

WATTLES.—The wattles are not a point of very much note, nor do any deductions for defects in them appear in the club standard; but it must not be understood from this that any kind of wattle will

do. I have seen more than one otherwise good cockerel that has had its appearance quite spoiled by one or both wattles being shrunken and misshapen.

To be perfect they must be a brilliant red, thin, and of fine texture, free from folds, and in the male bird long and rounded at the end. In the hen they should be round and firm, and stand out well below the lower mandible.

COLOUR.—The ground colour of a perfect Andalusian should, as the name implies, be of a distinctly blue cast, not simply grey or slate, but of a silvery blue colour—almost pigeon blue, in fact. Each feather on the breast, shoulders, and thighs must be laced with a distinct and well defined and not too narrow margin of dark blue, or brilliant black for preference. The feathers being as large and broad as possible, the more distinct the lacing the better, and, provided the margin is black or almost so, I may say that the lighter the blue ground colour the better. Unfortunately, many of the birds possessing a really light silver blue ground colour can show but a very poor quality of lacing, and it is to superimpose the dark marginal marking upon the light ground that all the efforts of the breeder are concentrated. Many breeders are apt to speak in rather sneering terms of these silver blue birds, and christen them "washy," and at the same time endeavour to popularise a duskier tone under the term "medium shade." That a light blue possessing only poor lacing does look washy, I must admit, but given the desired quality of dense lacing, it matters not then how light a blue the body colour may be, provided of course that it is a blue and not a dove colour; it can then never be deservedly called washy by anyone. The neck hackles, back, and saddle hackles of the cock should be as black as possible, for preference showing a slightly purplish cast in certain lights, but whatever the tone, it must be as brilliant in sheen as it can be got. The hackles of the hen are much darker than the general body colour, showing black on the head and top of the neck, the lower hackles appearing laced upon the shoulder and back. The back feathers of the hen must also be well laced right up to the tail coverts; there seems to be great difficulty in producing hens that are really well laced on the back, and as well laced breasts are, comparatively speaking, common enough, a bird with a good back must be valued accordingly. The wing secondaries in both sexes are only too frequently of the plain ground colour without much sign of lacing, but it is needless to say that it is very much better that the lacing should show even here as distinctly as possible; in fact, a cockerel with a laced wing is invaluable for breeding laced pullets, and when perfect on this point his beauty is very considerably enhanced.

The tail primaries of the cock must be a bright shade of blue to match the ground colour of the breast (unfortunately in the plate of ideals the tail primaries of the cock are made to appear black), while the sickles, secondary sickles, and tail coverts should be of a dark blue or almost black tint. I have always been of the

impression, however, that the black sickled birds were produced originally by the Minorca cross, and consequently I am not particularly impressed with them. Some of the prettiest coloured cock birds I have seen have had tails *entirely* blue even to the sickles, and the contrast between this and a black saddle hackle has been a point of beauty too attractive to be lightly passed over. But it is no use fighting single-handed against prejudice, and fashion has asserted that the sickles of the tail shall for preference be very dark blue or black, shading down to a lighter cast on the hangers and coverts. There is another point that must not be overlooked in reference to these dark sickled tails. Remembering that we want our hens with clear blue tails, and knowing the difficulty there is in getting them really clear and free from smuttiness, I am afraid we can lay the blame of the difficulty upon the use of the black sickled males, and if this is the reason there will be no chance of producing pullets of the right colour unless we *descend* to running different breeding pens for producing cockerels and pullets. I have not had any experience in breeding silver pencilled Hamburghs, but I am told that it is the fact of the male bird having a dark sickle and the female a light tail that maintains the necessity of breeding such from different pens; and all who have looked into it are of unanimous opinion that such dual breeding is the cause of the total neglect which that variety is experiencing. Whatever, therefore, we must put up with, let us not push the Andalusian to that fearful extreme. If it is necessary to give up the black sickle or the bright blue tail, let us do so, if we cannot have both, but in any case let us have compromise before destruction.

The tail of the hen *should* be, as I have said, of a bright silver blue, each feather being well laced with black, but it is only too frequently seen of a muddy tinge throughout, and it would be an improvement in the breed if we could produce laced tails in both sexes—a difficult thing to do, no doubt, but a point well worth striving for.

I do not consider that the judges give proper value to colour; they may value it rightly *on the whole*, but in deducting—mentally, of course—points for colour defects, they do not do so in fair proportion, when compared with their proceeding in the case of white face.

There seems to be a few differences of opinion as to what colour the legs of the Andalusian should be. I have seen nearly all shades among them, even willow; but a very common colour in young birds is a kind of light grey, covered with spots of a darker shade of the same colour. Strange to say, many of such coloured legs are associated with unusually good body colour, and though this spotted effect is not particularly pretty, the colour of the plumage may be quite good enough to carry them through. Such mottled legs will often darken and become more uniform with age, but every effort should be made to obtain a leg of a dark bluish grey, fairly uniform in tint all through. These, with a lighter toe nail, are attractive, and

match well with the ground colour of the body. The last few years many cockerels have been shown, and shown successfully, with legs nearly black, many winners during that period having legs of this colour; but as such have frequently been accompanied with a very dark breast, I have always been of opinion that they point to a throwback to the original Minorca cross. Such legs are not ill-looking, but the fact that the club standard says legs leaden blue, and places among its list of disqualifications "other legs than blue," and that the bluish grey leg harmonises better with the under plumage, would make it appear that the so-called preference for black legs is a matter more of expediency than choice.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STANDARD OF PERFECTION.*

It is the usual rule for each writer upon any of the pure varieties of domestic poultry to issue along with his treatise a standard of perfection as designed by himself. I may, therefore, be excused if I venture to follow in this well-worn line, and trust that this being a recognised custom, I may be allowed to criticise such standards as have been brought under my notice without any further apology. First and foremost we must necessarily place *the* standard.

The Andalusion fowl is one of those fortunate varieties that are now carefully nurtured by the fostering supervision of a specialist club. This is not always an unmixed advantage, if we are to believe the numerous rumours that reach us of internal jealousies, wholesale secessions, and even open rebellions that are almost everyday occurrences in the *ménage* of many of the other clubs; but ours seems to sail along with a wonderful smoothness and vitality, and if it were not for the very slight attack made by certain sections of the Leghorn fancy, the management of the Leghorn, Plymouth Rock, and Andalusian Club may fairly claim to be above cavil, as it is certainly above the suspicion of cliquism. If the action of a club was of no other benefit to the varieties under its control than the giving to it of a recognised official standard of perfection, it could still claim to be of great utility, as, roughly speaking, it is on the lines laid down by such official standards that all breeders are expected to work. Such a standard is not, however, an arbitrary one; it simply takes the form of the late Elijah Goff's well-known election address, at the conclusion of which the candidate for political honours is made to add: "Them, gentlemen and ladies, is my sentiments, and if they is not approved of, they ken be changed." A satire behind which lies an ocean of truth.

Thus, as we progress in the march towards perfection, the standard may be relied upon to march with us, and it is only the desire to see it improved that has tempted me to venture upon the thankless task of criticism.

It is almost an impossibility to write down upon paper the actual value to be placed upon different points of excellence in a bird you are attempting to judge. When the table of defects says subtract fifteen points for squirrel tail, no difficulty need arise; but take the question of colour. You are told that if a bird is faulty in

* It is a matter of regret to me that the Poultry Club, which is on the point of publishing a series of Standards, and, among others, one for the Andalusian, has not, up to the time of this second edition going to press, been able to issue them, and consequently this chapter seems in a measure to be incomplete.

colour you are to take off twenty points. This sounds simple enough, and if the bird entirely lacked lacing and had a light grey hackle, etc., you might safely subtract the whole hundred points for what the bird would be worth; but as to what proportion of the said twenty points you are to deduct for varying qualities of lacing and for different shades of hackle, or upon which portion of the body colour you are to place the greatest value, that has, willy nilly, to be left entirely to the discretion of the judge for the time being. Fortunately, we are not saddled in this country with the ridiculous system of judging by the score card, and therefore the estimated deductions by different judges are not likely to be so wide apart. Judged by comparison, it is much easier to come to some general valuation, and though the table of defects gives us a fair idea of the value of certain points, it does not tie us down by a hard and fast line, and is of great help to the comparison judge, even without the use of the figures. I may, however, add that it has been stated by one very successful breeder that he has not much faith in any scale of points, "believing that most systems in practical working must be unsatisfactory."

I give below three tables representing the value of defects as published by the club, Mr Lewis Wright, and Mr L. C. Verrey, a bird perfect throughout being valued at 100 points in each case:—

THE L., P.R., AND A. CLUB.

Bad shaped comb	10
Ear lobe folded or wrinkled	5
Stain of red on lobe	5
Want of hackle	8
Squirrel tail	15
Faults in colour	20
Want of size	10
Want of symmetry	15
Want of condition	12
	100

DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Face not red, Dorking combed, five toes on either foot, other legs than blue; red, yellow, or white feathers anywhere.

BY MR LEWIS WRIGHT. REDUCED TO 100.

Bad shaped comb	11
Ear lobe folded, wrinkled, or duplicated	6
White on face	11
Stain of red on ear lobe	9
Scabs or blemishes on ditto	6
Want of hackle	4
Squirrel tail	9
Faults in plumage	9
Want of size	11
Want of symmetry	14
Want of condition	10
	100

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DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Cock's comb falling over to one side, hen's standing erect; combs trimmed, cut, or pierced; crooked backs or tails, or any other deformity; any fraudulent trimming, dyeing, or dressing whatever; birds not matching in the pen; white feathers in the plumage, or black, except as a lacing or on cock's hackles.

BY MR L. C. VERREY.

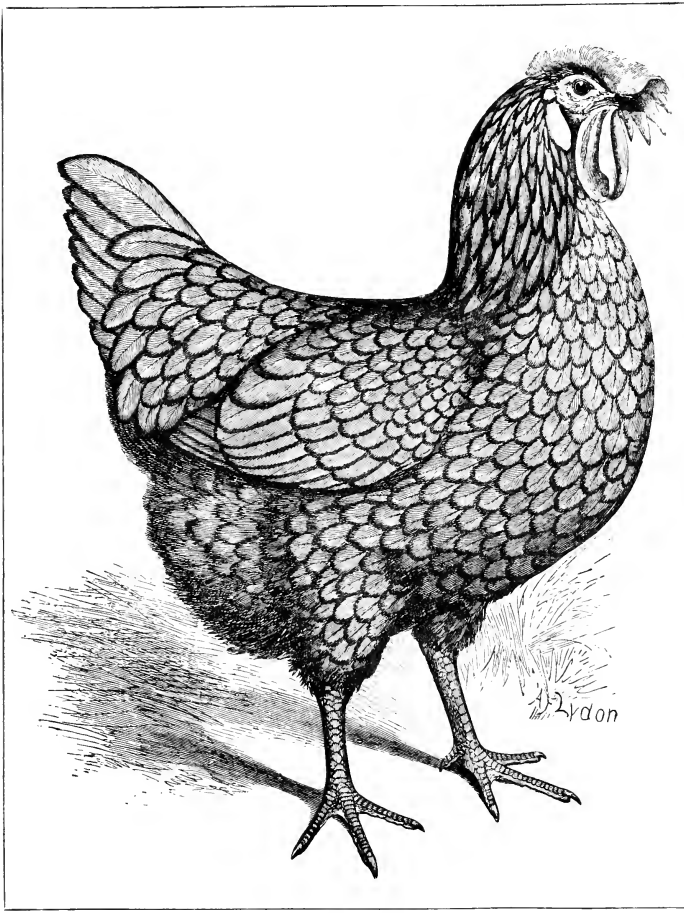
COCK.		HEN.	
Too large or too small a comb...	6	Too small a comb	6
Comb badly shaped, thumb marked, or side sprig ...	6	Side sprigs on comb	6
Ear lobe folded or wrinkled ...	6	Double folded comb	6
Red stains on lobe	6	Ear lobe wrinkled or puckered...	6
White spots or specks in face ...	15	Ear lobe red stains	6
Want of hackle...	6	White spots or specks in face ...	15
Red, brown, or gold feathers in hackle...	10	Irregular markings on breast ...	15
Want of or uneven markings in breast...	10	Want of condition	10
Want of condition	10	Want of symmetry	15
Want of symmetry	10	Want of size	15
Want of size	15		
	100		100

DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Comb erect in hen; ear lobes quite red; yellow, red, or white feathers anywhere; legs any other colour than blue.

In glancing through the above tables it will be at once seen that even on so simple a matter as the valuation of defects, experienced individuals may differ in an extraordinary manner, but as the official standard was compiled by the Andalusian Club, or a properly elected representative committee of that body, it is only natural to suppose that the members of such committee were all and individually fanciers who had a thorough knowledge of the breed for the benefit of which they had met. I have not the pleasure of knowing who the gentlemen selected were, nor even how many of them were in at the task, but it strikes me that if they were each to give their opinion privately we should find that it did not coincide with the combined result of their efforts.

The most glaring error, to my mind, in the club standard is the very low value at which colour is rated. It was the opinion of the late Mr Beldon that colour in the black Hamburgh variety should stand at not less that sixty points, and here, in a breed that is really quite as much a bird of colour as the black Hamburgh, we have the official declaration that only twenty points must be allowed on this count. There are so many things to be considered, however, that we can perhaps hardly ask for sixty points for colour, but I think it would be a wise departure on the part of the club if they increased the number allowed in their standard to, at the very least, double.

I need hardly point out to anyone that Mr Lewis Wright's table of defects can hardly be considered up to date. Every



MONS. V. JAQMOTTE'S HEN.

allowance, however, may be made for it, as the author for some inscrutable reason has lumped his standards for Minorcas, Andalusians, and Anconas all into one, thus allowing the same number of points for colour in the Andalusian as in the Minorca. This, being only 9 per cent., is ridiculous on the face of it. Again, for different faults in the ear lobe, he would deduct a total of no less than 21 per cent., which is even more absurd than his valuation for colour.

Mr Wright places white in face among the defects, and does not disqualify for same, which I agree with, on the grounds I have already stated; but he qualifies this by saying that personally he would prefer to disqualify, but whereas in actual practice judges will not take this extreme course, he considers it futile to put in the list of disqualifications that which is only treated as a serious defect.

On the other hand, Mr Verrey, by what I must regard as a slip, places the same fault among the table of defects, and after deducting fifteen points for it—although not putting it amongst his list of disqualifications—states that judges ought not to award a prize to a bird showing the defect. Another anomaly in Mr Verrey's suggested standard is the condemning of red or gold feather in the hackle to the tune of ten points, and then below that, *disqualifying* for the same fault. Though not quite so far out as Mr Wright, Mr Verrey is still behind the times in his allowance for colour, and as he is known to have a good eye for a good coloured bird, I think he will agree with me here, and acknowledge the error.

I am indebted to Captain Egerton Jones for the loan of a very interesting collection of standards as proposed by several leading lights in the Andalusian world, and it is extremely gratifying to me to find that my objections to the official standard, on the point of colour, are strongly borne out by the opinions expressed by these gentlemen. Also, as I may acknowledge to my astonishment, my contention that white specks in face should be looked upon more as a serious defect than as a disqualification is supported in the same manner.

The general opinion expressed in this collection is that greater stress should be laid upon the importance of size than has been the case heretofore, and accordingly that length of leg and massive conspicuous shanks must be striven for. The comparatively low carriage of tail also, I am glad to see, is coming into more favour, and with it more compact tails, particularly in the hen. The big meaty comb of the Minorca, too, is about unanimously condemned, which in itself is a step in the right direction. Taken altogether, the collection contains matter of considerable interest to all breeders of the blue; and though there are many breeders still whose opinions would be well worth adding to the list, it would be greatly to the advantage of the variety if Captain Egerton Jones could see his way to publish such a condensed mass of useful information.*

* As it was eventually decided to publish this series of standards in connection with this book, I must refer my readers to the Appendix.

Summing up, therefore, I would suggest the following table of defects as being more applicable to the Andalusian of to-day—a perfect bird to count 100 points:—

Faulty in comb	10		
,, ,, face	10	head	25
,, ,, lobe	5		
,, ,, ground colour ...	30		
,, ,, lacing	20	colour ...	50
,, ,, shape, hackle, and tail		...	10
,, ,, size, carriage, and condition ...		...	15
			100

SERIOUS DEFECTS.—Cock's comb *going* over, hen's comb *nearly* erect; semi-serrations, side sprigs, twist or thumb mark in comb. Paleness or specks of white in face; red tinge on lobe; squirrel tail; want of or grey hackle; shrunken wattles; white feathers upon the body (white or greyish feathers being in the case of old birds allowable in the wing primaries and upon the head, provided they are not in excess; white feathers in the tail, however, to be a fatal defect).

FATAL DEFECTS.—Comb, not single, quite over in cock or quite erect in hen. Face quite white, lobe quite red. Legs any other colour than blue or very dark slate; feathered legs, more or less number of toes than four upon each foot. Any other body colour than blue; black only allowable in lacing and hackle, back saddle and sickle of cock. Wry tail or any other deformity, and being totally out of condition.

DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Trimming and faking.

CHAPTER V.

BUILDING A STRAIN AND PEDIGREE BREEDING.

With a poultry press open for the publication of the opinions of our more prominent breeders, it is difficult in these days of enlightenment to say anything about a standard variety—or, in fact, anything relating to poultry matters at all—that shall be entirely new. History repeats itself in this subject quite as much as in any other subject under the sun; but while I hold that in a work of this character a good deal of matter that should of necessity be published along with a treatise embracing the whole field of fancy poultry breeding is in this case better treated as extraneous and left out, I think this will hardly apply to the subject as defined by the heading to this chapter.

The term "strain," as applied in the majority of the advertisements in the weekly papers, may more aptly be said to be misapplied. It is no uncommon thing to see advertised eggs from pens containing birds of Messrs A., B., C., and D.'s strains, as if such a collection of names, well known in *The Feathered World*, would be an attraction to the purchasing public. I suppose it can hardly be doubted that such a statement is an attraction, or the selling public would soon tire of paying the price of the advertisements; but the value received by the purchasing public is hardly that which it ought to be. Even if every individual bird in the breeding pen were confined to the strain of one of the advertised breeders, it does not make the pen of any more value unless a judicious selection had been made of them, and they had been mated upon scientific principles. And if the breeding pen, as advertised, contained the very best procurable specimens from each of the named yards, if such birds had been got together in a haphazard manner, regardless of anything like method, their progeny would be very unlikely to give satisfaction for the amount expended.

It is the ambition of most breeders to form a strain of their own which can be relied upon to breed something approaching what is mated up for, so that if, in building the foundation of the strain, the builder is deluded into buying eggs or chickens from such mixed blood as I have suggested, be the parent stock never so good individually, nothing but disappointment will accrue. I, for one, never had much faith in those who advertise birds of Mr So-and-So's strain. They may be very honest individuals, and men who are anxious to give good value for money received; but does it not strike you that if you are commencing a variety, it would be far safer to treat with a man who relied upon himself, his own birds, and his own way of mating, than with one whose only claim to

having a good breeding pen is that they have been got from some other individual better known?

It is all very well for the independent breeder to introduce birds of strange blood into his yard, but he does so for a specific purpose, and is not likely to advertise the fact. He may tell you, if you ask him, from whom he bought this cockerel or that pullet; but once bought, he considers they are, as it were, incorporated into his own blood, and are mere units in a compact whole.

Advertisements such as I have described are doubtless of use to the gentlemen I have christened Messrs A., B., C., and D., in helping them to dispose of stock without extra expense, by keeping their names before the public in as cheap a manner as possible, and, viewed from a charitable standpoint, it seems only fair that they should be repaid in some such manner for the time and money they must have spent in bringing their strains up to the standard attained. Given that Mr A.'s strain is of great value, and is the result of many years' careful mating, a bird of that individual's own breeding, and of his full blood, even if perfect from an exhibition point of view, is of no exceptional value in the breeding pen unless it is made use of on the same lines as it would if utilised by Mr A. himself.

To form a strain of your own it is necessary first to make up your mind from what yard you will secure your foundation. Then has to be decided whether to purchase eggs therefrom (if possible) or go in for the apparently greater initial expense of buying the birds themselves. It is a difficult thing to say which is the best course to adopt, as, provided sufficient judgment is used, a successful start may result from either method.

In purchasing eggs no measure of success can be expected unless a thorough knowledge is obtained of the birds from which such eggs are produced, the quality of the male bird, and the principle upon which the breeder is proceeding. I may by some be considered rather hypercritical in saying this, but if the beginner wishes to make a good start it is of no use his purchasing eggs in a haphazard manner. If it is only a good laying strain of blues you want, or if it is simply your desire to go in for Andalusians because you like the colour, and have no ambition to produce anything high class, then you need take no particular pains in satisfying yourself as to the science used in crossing the birds from which you get your eggs; but, as I say, if you expect *more*, then you must go to more trouble in making yourself thoroughly acquainted with the antecedents of your stock.

As it is almost an impossibility to procure eggs from many private breeders who do not advertise—price with many of them being no temptation—the beginner is practically forced to make his selection of yard from the advertisements in the weekly press, and as the number there gathered together seems to increase year by year, the difficulty that a restricted choice would entail is entirely removed.

Select, if possible, a breeder whose place is at a get-at-able distance from where you reside, that is to say if there are none of them whom you know personally and can trust sufficiently to leave the matter entirely to them. If then you can arrange to see the pen of birds from which the eggs you are in want of are obtained, and can satisfy yourself of the quality and the judiciousness of the mating of same, make your terms as to price, and don't hesitate about a few shillings extra per sitting, if you can get the eggs guaranteed from a pen you like; and, what is more, do not expect such wonders in return for next to nothing. Here is a proportion sum, which it is as well one should remember when buying eggs from fancy poultry. Many beginners expect that if they pay 5s a dozen they ought to be sure of obtaining the very best eggs in the country. A barnyard hen costs, say, 3s, and the eggs are worth, say, 1s a dozen. Leaving out the question of food, etc., then eggs worth 5s a dozen ought to be produced by hens worth 15s each.

$$1 \div 3 \times 5 = 15.$$

Not a very high price for a good bird, surely—not even selling class price. A really first-class breeding pen of, say, cock and six hens ought to be worth not a penny less than from fifteen to twenty guineas, many a single bird costing more, so that if you get from such a pen eggs at, say, 15s a dozen you are getting them cheap.

While on this subject I should just like to point out that it is principally due to the extreme selfishness, and very often the dishonesty of certain buyers, that so many of our better yards in this, as in other varieties, are strictly closed to the purchasers of eggs. I have been wearied beyond measure of hearing and seeing complaints of so-called cheating on the part of sellers of eggs, and so little attempt to refute the libel, that I think it just as well to utter a warning note to the purchasing public before they push matters to a crisis. It is beyond the power of the most honest breeder in existence to guarantee that every egg that he sells for breeding shall contain a chick, and provided that he will guarantee that the eggs he sells are from a pen containing a vigorous cockerel, a known stockgetter, are fresh or nearly so, that they have not been tampered with in any way likely to be deleterious to the germ, and that they will be carefully packed and as carefully despatched, I do not consider that anything more can reasonably be expected of him. If you expect unfertiles to be replaced it means, perhaps, taking an average of the season, that for each dozen you pay for, you will require sixteen eggs from the seller. As sixteen eggs will cost so much more to produce than twelve, the breeder must perforce be justified in reducing the quality of his breeding pen to cover the difference. My experience and the experience of many others of my acquaintance is that there are quite as many honest men among the sellers as there are among the buyers. So frequently, in fact, have purchasers been found out in impudent, if not fraudulent, demands for more eggs, that many of the more conscientious among the breeders have, as I have stated, entirely given up egg selling in

disgust. That this is a loss to the Fancy at large I need hardly say, and it therefore behoves us all to clear away the motes that obstruct our own sight before operating upon the optics of our neighbours.

Your eggs purchased, if you cannot carry them home yourself, give strict instructions that they are to be sent to you by *rail*, avoiding parcel post as you would a pestilence; and, as regards the packing, each individual seems to have his or her own preference, but I must say that, after trying many methods, I have found none to equal Freeth and Pocock's patent boxes. If there is any objection to these boxes it is that they are not made strong enough, and will not last many journeys without giving way at some points, whereas such excellent internal arrangements as they possess, with a felt lined receptacle for each egg, deserve a more lasting outside cover, such as will stand such knocking about as frequent transit undoubtedly entails.

As regards the time of year to purchase your eggs, I should strongly advise waiting until end of April at earliest, and even a week or two later you may do even better. The later chicks will not be of much use for exhibition purposes, coming into condition when most of the shows are over; but what of that? It is the greatest mistake a beginner can make to attempt to show with the chicks of the first season. Wait till you have better to pick from, when your chances will be greater, and your risk of disappointment much less. Then again, such chickens, although hatched and reared under your own care, can hardly be called of your own breeding, seeing that the parents are not in your possession, and though there may be a little profit, there is precious little honour in winning with birds that do not owe their perfections to your own talent and skill.

My reasons for recommending this rather late start in the season are, firstly, that the best breeders, from the purchaser's point of view, are those who keep together none but their best birds, and consequently have not a second-rate pen put up to advertise eggs from. These gentlemen will, as a rule, require for their own purposes all the eggs they can get in the early months, and could spare none at any price to any outsider. The buyer also runs considerable risk of unfertile eggs when hatching in January or February, and if the season is cold and stormy even March eggs are none too fertile. By the time I stated—end of April and May—eggs are hatching well, and the buyer runs a better chance of getting his eggs from better birds. Perhaps about the strongest point in favour of making so late a start is that you can often get to see chicks that have been hatched in January out of eggs from the same pen you are getting your own from. And, seeing them, although only from three to four months old, you may get a good general idea what to expect from your purchase.

In buying stock birds for your breeding pen you may follow closely upon the lines recommended in buying the eggs. In May, when so many breeding pens are about to be broken up to make

room for young stock, the owners are generally glad enough to accept one quarter the price that they would ask for the same bird six months before, and a whole pen may be picked up (say, cock and four hens) for a mere song—a pen that has been used by the owner to breed from for his own wants, and from which he has chickens running about which you may get to see. Of course it will be necessary to assure yourself that the birds are in vigorous health and that they are not "pumped out," and consequently rendered valueless.

Your chickens from so late purchased a pen, although hardly early enough to make much for exhibition (although it may be borne in mind that the Andalusian cockerel 1st at the Dairy Show, 1893, bred by the exhibitor, Captain Egerton Jones, was only hatched early in the month of May, and that the champion pullet Club Show, December, 1894, was born in the first week of July), will still give you a chance to pick a cockerel from for next year's breeding.

If the beginner should be unable to come across a good breeding pen in the market, or should have a preference for mating up his own first pen, time will be saved by getting together a stock in which the two sexes are related to some extent. Here we trespass upon the confines of in-breeding. Bear this in mind, however, that if by in-breeding we can assist Nature in perpetuating certain points of beauty in our pets, we can also as readily by the same means perpetuate faults and defects. In-breeding, therefore, without good material and skilful application, is useless; with both, it is almost irresistible.

Select your hens, as near as possible, of the same type. Whatever their faults are, let them be uniform. By so doing, and securing a cockerel particularly good in the points wherein his partners fail, there is every chance that some percentage of the chickens may come being fairly good all round. It is to a certain extent advantageous if the hens are all purchased from the same yard, when, in such case, the seller may be able to introduce you to some other breeder of standing whose strain is slightly related to his own, and from whom you may be able to secure a cockerel of such quality as you are in search of.

Should it suit you better to pick your birds up here and there, without regard to relationship, such will give you a more personal right and credit in your strain if success follows the effort; but you must be fully prepared to take two or three years longer before you attain much success.

Let me here warn the beginner against getting together an inferior lot of birds in the expectation of being able to breed up with care and attention to a winning standard. It is hard enough work to turn out cracks when you have the best blood obtainable, but with inferior stock the task is well nigh impossible. Good blood will always be found to be the cheapest, "with it one may have disappointments, but without it, expect nothing else."

Making up your mind to wait in patience for the fruits of your labours, you will in consequence not expect anything from the first year's cross, but for your second year's breeding you will be in a position to mate up more than one pen. With the old hens run one of the cockerels you have bred, selecting the one that, like its sire, is as near perfect as possible in those points in which the hens are defective. The two-year-old cock will then make a good match with a selection of the pullets, selecting them, of course, with due reference towards the compensation of defects. From two such pens as these you may reasonably expect something a little step nearer perfection. Then every year in mating up strictly avoid bringing in any cross that is entirely unrelated, but as you keep account of the relative quality of the blood in your strain, and the proportion of Messrs A. and B.'s blood you have introduced, you will, by the occasional help of birds from these gentlemen's yards, build up a strain of your own, that, while not too closely in-bred, yet is sufficiently so to be relied upon with a fair amount of certainty.

As amateurs have been, times without number, warned against the indiscriminate purchase of prize-winners, if they expect to make a successful start in the building up of a strain, I have endeavoured to give some reasons why such purchases are liable to result in disappointment. It would appear to the outsider that no better breeding stock could be got together than the cup winners at the leading shows, but it must not be forgotten that prize-winners are generally of that class that may be called *fair-all-round* specimens, with perhaps no particular *faults*, and yet, perhaps, no absolute *perfection*. Now, such are not the best birds to breed from. A bird that is as near perfect as possible in some few of the numerous points of the variety, and that may be as glaringly faulty in some other point or points, is far more satisfactory as a stock bird when judiciously mated on the compensating principle. Again, the novice must bear in mind that the breeder wants to be in the position of being able to rely upon the reproduction in his youngsters of the qualities he possesses in his breeding stock.

It has been frequently asserted, and for that matter sufficiently proved, that there is a tendency in all animals, in the reproduction of their kind, to revert back to some original ancestor of their race. It being the aim of the fancier to produce an animal—but, as we are speaking of the feathered tribe, let us say a bird—that is capable of producing a counterpart of itself, or one even a step nearer to some imaginary ideal standard of perfection, this peculiar tendency in the animal kingdom has to be grasped, as it were, by the scientific breeder, and instead of allowing the principle to run riot and produce a heterogeneous result, to make use of it by carefully mating birds having the same racial tendencies, and thus lift the possibilities and expectations of reproduction from the slough of haphazard into the region of calculation.

The peculiar trait in domesticated birds of reverting back to

some earlier ancestor is wonderfully intensified when the birds mated are of two entirely distinct and unallied breeds. Breeds so entirely distinct and dissimilar as the Black Spanish and the White Silky have, when crossed, been known to throw birds with the ruddy plumage and other characteristics of the supposed progenitor of all varieties, the *Gallus bankiva*, while birds of two non-sitting varieties when mated together have thrown young that have eventually proved to be as good sitters as could be wished for; and this being the case, in a milder degree birds of the same breed and variety, but of different strains, when crossed together are liable to give rather mystifying results, in that the progeny may bear little or no resemblance to either parent. It was only after long years of patient experiment that this rule was found to obtain, and by making good use of their knowledge breeders have been enabled to arrive at their goal by shorter, if not safer, routes.

To hold this reverting trait in check is therefore the first aim of the fancier. It is quite sufficient for him if his chicks can be relied upon to *revert to their parents*.

Theoretically, of course, it may be very easy to build up a scheme of mating by which to assist Nature in the simple law of like producing like, but very little actual practice is necessary in showing that there is no hard-and-fast groove in which Nature works. Take the closest system of in-breeding. Pair together a cockerel and pullet that have been bred from the same father and mother that have themselves been bred from a strain long in-bred. Being of exactly the same blood, it might be calculated that, as their tendencies are likely to be the same, their produce one and all will have a strong family resemblance. But it is not so. Out of a dozen chicks, there may be ten or a dozen different styles, with little or no actual resemblance among the lot. The result may be the same even if the parents themselves, as sister and brother, bear a strong resemblance to each other outside the usual sexual differences of character. Apparently disappointing as the produce of the cross might be, a small percentage of the chicks might show signs that the breeder is on the right track. Thus, it is a general rule, on account of the impossibility of procuring perfect birds, to mate up for breeding birds having compensating qualities. That is to say, if we take the head points of an Andalusian for illustration, supposing the male bird is extra good in comb, yet fails slightly in lobe, then a hen whose lobes are above the average and whose comb is her weak point will make a fair match. If, then, from such a pair we can produce, say, 10 or 15 per cent. of chickens whose head points are perfect, being equally good in comb and lobe (supposing these two points were all that had to be considered, which, of course, they are not), then the parents of such progeny could be said to mate well, and we should not be far out in describing that as a fortunate cross. Here we have the desired end of compensating mating; and although the percentage of birds up to the standard may be small, the fact that certain points

striven for are obtained is proof that the breeder is working on the right lines.

It may, I think, be taken for granted that nearly all varieties are in a *progressive* state. We each consider our own especial hobby to be nearer perfection than it was twenty years ago. The progress may be slow, but, if unnoticed year by year, we look upon it as pretty certain that the improvement is none the less sure. This being so, each succeeding year's breeding pen in the hands of the careful fancier may be said to be a slight—perhaps only a very slight—advance in quality over the preceding one. The progeny, therefore, by combining in themselves the best points of their parents, will be showing to a certain extent some further advance towards perfection, whereas did they revert back to some ancestral occupant of the breeding pen, say some half-dozen years previously, they would simply be stepping back so many years, and losing the advantage already gained.

My contention, that in-breeding intensifies the power of the parent to reproduce its own likeness in its progeny, is not altogether the same ground upon which other breeders base their trust in the principle. I have heard it asserted that as it is (according to the speakers) impossible to prevent the tendency to "throw back," that judicious in-breeding simply secures to the breeder a succession of fairly good ancestors, any one of whom may be thrown back to without much risk; but this argument is, in my opinion, somewhat slipshod. I therefore have no hesitation in re-affirming my belief in the theory that a parent which is in itself the concrete result of a long course of judicious in-breeding has within itself an intensified power of self-reproduction, and that by using such parents, the tendency to throw back is, if not eliminated, at any rate held strongly in check.

Mr Bakewell, formerly well known as a breeder of pedigree cattle, was one of the strongest supporters of the principles of in-breeding, but was heard to say that in-breeding from inferior stuff was sheer waste of time.

The parents of the strain must be the best obtainable, both in character and health. Good birds of well-established pedigree can now be obtained at prices so reasonable that to attempt to make a strain by building up from mediocrity is, to say the least of it, injudicious, and unless your heart be pretty well case-hardened, it is as well to grasp all the advantages that are to be obtained from the labours of those of your brother fanciers who have trodden the path before you.

To consider the question thoroughly from the fairest standpoint, it must be thoroughly understood that in-breeding does not of necessity mean *close* breeding. By the former term is meant the pairing together of birds that are related together by blood, but such relationship may be very distant—Irish cousinship, in fact; whereas close-breeding is usually applied to the principle of breeding from a cross between members of the same family; father and daughter or

mother and son, such being a half-blood cross, but in the case of a whole blood cross, as between brother and sister, this is the closest breeding possible. and has been termed by Sir John Sebright breeding in-and-in.

Strains that for several generations have been bred in too closely, even if the members of the family were in a state of perfect health and condition, are, I believe, always liable to sterility. This, of course, may be Nature's method of showing her objection to the system, but if it can only be proved that such close breeding assists in the operation of producing (what I believe has never yet been produced, viz.,) perfectly-formed specimens, there are few breeders but what will even run the risk of their strain becoming extinct in the mad rush for superiority. If, however, with all the care in the world in the way of the rigid exclusion of all birds whose bill of health is in any way doubtful, it can be shown that close breeding is prejudicial to the stamina of the strain, it will really mean death to the system by the natural extinction of the individuals. At the same time, whatever may be said against the principle of sailing so close to the wind by this inter-family mating, I do not consider that it has been as yet proved that the judicious mating together of birds related together distantly in blood, but having the same racial tendencies, is deleterious in any way to the feathered world. On this point Darwin says:—"The evil results from close breeding are difficult to detect, for they accumulate slowly and differ much in degree with different species, whilst the good effects which almost invariably follow a cross are from the first manifest. *It should, however, be clearly understood that the advantage of close inter-breeding, as far as the retention of character is concerned, is indisputable, and often outweighs the evil of a slight loss of constitutional vigour.*" (The italics are my own.) Such is the opinion of perhaps the greatest authority on the question at issue.

With all the forethought and care that may be brought to bear upon mating, it must always be remembered that only a very small percentage of the young can be expected to show anything like the desired improvement upon the breeding stock, so that failures must not lead the breeder to lose his patience with his flock, and despair tempt him to resort to a haphazard or happy-go-lucky system. In compiling my notes upon this subject I have endeavoured to get at the results of scientific mating as experienced by breeders of *all* varieties of domestic poultry, as whatever be the vagaries that obtain in other live stock, I think we may take it for granted that in this particular domain of the animal kingdom Nature has certain rules that may, to a very great extent, be relied upon to apply to all varieties.

As far as I can gather, not only from my own experience, but from others in whose capacity for observation I have great faith, there seems to be a pretty unanimous opinion that some of the best results in in-breeding have been obtained where the male bird has been mated to his daughter, and the female bird to her son. When

we consider that the male bird seems to have extraordinary power in impressing his likeness upon his female progeny and the female upon her male young, I think we have the success of this half-blood or inter-family crossing partially explained. As I have before stated, it is of little use in-breeding from inferior stock, and let us suppose a pen mated up and consisting of a two-year-old cock mated with yearling pullets of his own production, all of first-class quality, and, for the sake of argument, perfect in every way. The male bird, without reckoning the assisting influence of his mates, will produce an appreciable percentage of pullets in almost every way as good as himself. The females, with their power over the male progeny, will produce cockerels up to their own standard. That this power over the opposite sex must be wonderfully intensified by breeding from relations may be thus understood, as however little influence a hen may have upon her female young, it stands to reason that she may help the lord of the harem, and give more power to his already inherited prepotency.

As some of the most in-bred strains in the country are noted for their size, there is little risk of losing anything in that important point, but I am of the opinion that chickens from closely-bred parents are rather more delicate during the fledging period, and perhaps more liable to catch any chicken ailments that are about, but I have never found or heard of any reason to complain of their stamina when they are full grown, and have put on their adult plumage. Certain strains that are known to be highly in-bred have a tendency to furnish very slowly, particularly the cockerels; but this is no great detriment, and does not strengthen the case against the principle.

Let it be borne in mind that the advantage of an established strain consists not in its power to breed an occasional high flyer that shall carry all before it (unallied blood will do this *very* occasionally), but the well-bred strain can always be relied upon to throw a good average all-round quality of chicken, the more reliance can be placed upon the chances of the season's breeding, and an extra good one among such is of priceless value.

CHAPTER VI.

MATING.

In mating up the breeding pens the simple rule of never breeding from any but blue birds *must* be strictly adhered to. At the present time the colour of the Andalusian is very far from being established, and on this one point it is the duty of every breeder to assist in the difficult process of bringing the variety up to the level of its many contemporaries that can be relied upon to breed true.

I do not suppose for a moment that the day will ever come when this variety will produce progeny all of one *shade* of blue, but that is not a matter of importance. The very variety of tints that may be bred gives a certain amount of zest to the efforts of the fancier, but it is very much in the interest of the Andalusian that it should be brought up to such a degree of perfection that some reliance can be placed upon its power of producing its own likeness. It has been stated, on the authority of Mr John Hopkins, of Bridgwater, that if a black and a white Andalusian be mated together, the result is that the whole of the chickens will be entirely blue, but that such blue chickens do not develop much in the way of lacing at maturity; and, further, that if these blues in turn be bred from, their progeny will revert back to the grandparents, and be almost without exception entirely black or white. A cross, therefore, of one of these two off colours cannot in any way help the breeder. If a strain of blues have by some means or other got into the way of producing chicks all of too light a shade of blue, a cross with a dark blue—and dark blues may be obtained in plenty—must be used, and *not* a black. I regret to see that Mr Verrey openly recommends, under certain circumstances, a cross of the black. Whatever may be the *immediate* advantage of such a proceeding, I hold that the ultimate evil is so great in rashly losing all the advantage that years of careful mating may have given, that it would be mere madness to make the attempt. And let it not be forgotten that when this experiment has been made in one yard, the evil is not always confined, as by dispersal by sale or otherwise of such tainted stock many would-be clean yards reap the bad results of the cross. Bad, however, as the influence of a cross with a black Andalusian may be, I think it is more than equalled by the rashness with which so many breeders have introduced the Minorca, although I can hardly think that such a cross is now resorted to by anyone who has any regard for his strain.

It has been stated in certain quarters that by eliminating the tendency to throw black and white chicks, breeders would not be helping to improve the colour of the Andalusian. I have this as the view of Mr Merrall, and I believe he is also supported in this by the

Rev. R. T. Thornton. As I understand it, it is the opinion of these gentlemen that it is to the self-evident mixture of black and white blood in the veins of the blue to which we owe the distinct difference between the ground colour and the lacing. Both being such experienced breeders, there may possibly be something to be said in favour of their contention, but I trust that when in time the Andalusian is bred up to a point when it will produce blue chickens only—and I haven't the slightest doubt but that in time it will reach that point—it will be found that the distinctness of lacing will be so impressed upon the variety as to reproduce this most attractive colouring without the drawbacks that we now have to put up with.

I have long been of opinion that the only track upon which we can safely tread in getting rid of the blacks and whites is by adhering strictly to the rule of using blue parents only, combined with judicious in-breeding. In fact, summing up a very lengthy correspondence that appeared in the poultry press a year or two ago, it would appear that my surmise is fully borne out by facts, the introduction of strange blood being generally followed by a reversion to a greater tendency to produce off colours.

While on this subject, though, it is only fair to refer to a very valuable article, by Mrs Blacket Gill, that appeared in the summer number of *The Feathered World* for 1893, in which that lady stated that in noting the results from a pen of blues strictly in-bred, the percentage of blue chickens was far from satisfactory. I think, however, that this case may be taken as an exception, as it seems to be generally admitted that the reverse holds good; but that such an exception will take place is quite possible, and I have it on good authority that in such cases, where from in-bred parents the percentage of blues is only small, they will almost invariably be found to be exceptionally distinct in lacing; so that if we do not get value in an increase of the desired colour, we are more than compensated for any loss by an improvement in the *quality* of that colour. I have also been given to understand that since the above article was written, the writer of it has seen reason to endorse my own views.

In an earlier chapter I referred to the fact that the Minorca cross had been rather recklessly resorted to for the purpose, among other advantages, of getting rid of white faces in the Andalusian. In the standard of perfection for the Minorca, white face is a disqualification, and as such, any birds exhibiting traces of the fault are, or ought to be, rigorously condemned; and as a consequence the fault is gradually becoming scarcer in that variety. This is satisfactory so far as it goes; and a sound-faced bird is so pleasant an object to the eye that many sacrifices to obtain that result may very well be endured; but it must not be overlooked that the Minorca is as yet hardly considered as a bird of colour, so that I do not think that in the stern fight for sound faces anything has been lost further than a destruction of individuals in obtaining the victory. But it is not so with the Andalusian. In this variety

ground colour and lacing must be considered as above everything else, and if to obtain a sound face there is a temptation to proceed upon lines that would introduce a cross tending to destroy these points, then I hold that by such a proceeding we should be losing the substance in grasping—and only grasping—at the shadow.

The Minorca cross has brought us advantages that cannot be overlooked, and therein lies the temptation before which breeders have fallen. It gave us size, or perhaps I should say *bulk*, and a blacker hackle, which are themselves points of the very first importance, and we will grant that it has given us sounder faces. But against these we have to place a duller and much darker tone in the ground colour; in fact, on the breast of many good headed birds ground colour and lacing is all lost in unmixed blackness; then we have the larger meaty comb and wattles of the Minorca, which, as I have said before, look anything but attractive when fitted on a sprightly bird like the Andalusian *ought* to be; but, alas! the cross has also brought us a shorter legged, shorter and thicker necked, squarer and altogether more lumpy type of bird than we want—a bird more fit to bear the meaty comb that has been simultaneously produced.

Thus, when we consider the average bird that the cross has turned out, and bear in mind that, whatever may be said to the contrary, the traces of the cross, be they ever so small, are visible in almost every strain in the country, it will be seen that breeders of to-day have no light task in breeding out faults, in impressing more strongly into their strain the beauties that they already possess, and in leading up to that ideal which we shall no doubt reach, and which, for want of a better name, I have christened the "Andalusian of the future."

To maintain the real silver blue ground colour, together with rich, deep lacing, it is much better to mate together the light and dark blues than to run male and female together of the medium shade, the progeny of these latter being very liable to run off thin and washy in the lacing, whereas sharp, deep, and well-defined lacing is what is wanted. Opinions differ as to which cross is the better—the light cockerel with dark hens, or *vice versâ*—but it is always advisable, where room and expense is no object, to run at least a pen of each. On the whole, I believe most of the best pullets produced during the last few years have been got from the dark cockerel pens, but it does not always obtain, as I know from experience. In any case, see that the feathers on the breast of your cockerel are as large as possible, as such generally have cleaner cut lacing, and always show up better.

In selecting your light cockerel, be sure and get him even and clear in ground colour, well laced up to the throat. The lacing may be narrow, but this can be put up with provided it is sharp and well defined. These light cocks occasionally have a rather greyish hackle and saddle and blue sickle, but get the top colour as dark as possible without interfering with the clear breast.

While speaking of the colour of the breeding cockerels, I must lay particular stress upon the *tone* of the hackle feathers. If there is the slightest cast of brown about them, the chances are fully a hundred to one against their producing pullets of a clear blue ground colour, and consequently such dusty-looking specimens should ruthlessly be expelled from the breeding pen.

The hens to mate with the light cockerel must be very dark and broad in lacing, but *not too dark* in ground colour, although those that show too black in the throat might be found useful. Wing lacing is rather important here, and every hen should, if possible, be got with the wing secondaries distinctly margined with black. In some of these dark hens the breast and back lacing is of a rather spangly nature, but provided it is deep in tint and shows distinctly against the ground colour, it is not an objection of much importance.

The dark cockerels must be perfectly black on hackle, back, and saddle, showing in some cases—and such are preferred—a purplish sheen. The sickle is with such almost equally as black, and if possible the wing secondaries should be perceptibly laced. In fact, a perfect exhibition cockerel is what is wanted, but with rather broader lacing than usual, and if he is rather too dark on breast for showing he is just the thing for the breeding pen. The hens to mate with him would be much too light for exhibition purposes, being extra clear in ground colour, specially well laced on breast; but the lacing usually thins off in birds of such clear ground towards the stern, the wings sometimes showing hardly any lacing at all. A bird of thin Sebright lacing would be the perfect bird for such a pen, but it is almost impossible to get anything approaching this yet, so we must make the best use we can of the material at hand.

In reference to the size and shape of the stock birds, I need hardly point out how necessary it is to select both male and female as lengthy and massive in shank and bulky in body as possible, provided such bulk is solid and muscular, and not a mere mass of feathers. Great importance should also be attached to selecting birds of the correct Andalusian shape, particularly broad across the back from shoulder to shoulder, and—seen from above—with a well *rounded* outline tapering to the tail. Flat sided birds should be avoided, as such are generally indifferent stock getters, and the progeny from them are wanting in stamina. As the influence of the female preponderates in the perpetuation of such points as size and shape of the body, it is hardly wise to make use of hens that are very much under the average size, even if they are of exceptionally good colour, unless they are known to be descended from birds that are themselves quite up to the standard. On the other hand, provided he is good in head points and satisfactory in colour, a cockerel need never be rejected from the breeding pen for the one fault of being rather undersized.

It is the general opinion of nearly all breeders that to obtain size in the progeny it is advisable, as far as possible, to use hens of

two years of age and upwards in the breeding pen. I see no objection myself in using pullets, provided they are early hatched and of good size, but at the same time I believe that stronger chickens are obtained from adult hens if they are mated with a young and vigorous cockerel of not more than one year's growth.

I need say little as regards mating up to produce good head points, as knowing what a good head is, the breeder must endeavour to get the birds with the best head points obtainable, and if it is found necessary to make use of a bird inferior in this respect, let the other sex be selected to compensate for the defect. At the same time make every effort to get as perfect a comb as possible in the breeding cockerel. A great deal can be done by compensating mating, and it is not always possible nor convenient to get just what we want in our stock birds, but as the experience of almost all breeders tends to prove that the prepotency of the male bird is greater upon what may be called the fancy points, as head and colour, the use of a sire that has an unmitigated bad comb is a risk too serious to be run with impunity. Many very stylish cockerels, particularly smart in build, and of lovely colour, possess combs of what might be called the Game type, commencing further from the tip of the beak than usual, and not rising very high in front; in fact, with a rather backward slope. Though not of exhibition perfection, such combs have their value in the breeding pen, as they are almost invariably free from thumb-marks, and stand very erect.

A failing usually associated with the lighter cocks is white in face, and many that are sound enough as yearlings develop the fault later on in life. Some of the best coloured birds I ever came across have had this unfortunate tendency, and although for my own part, if I am to put up with a bird having a white face, I should prefer that it was among the hens, yet if the hens are sound in face I should not strongly object to a cockerel showing a slight trace of this fault, provided that he was a good one otherwise, and that he was of good descent, as if a strange cockerel be brought in, sound enough to all appearance, he may possibly, as I have said before, have the taint in his blood, and in this matter, as is many others, 'tis better to "bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of."

To give directions for breeding out the fault in a rational manner is easy enough if we go by the simple rule of never breeding from any but sound-faced parents. But if we are to follow that rule we should very often have to throw out a bird that had perhaps an almost perfect silver blue ground colour and black lacing. If the breeder can make up a pen composed of birds of the right colour, without utilising any that are unsound in face, then it is all the better; and the happy individual who has a large flock to select from may frequently find himself in this much-to-be-envied position. but I do not want to discourage those whose field of selection is much more limited, and who, like myself, can at best rear but a small number of birds. To these again I would say—Do not discard a bird

that is faulty in that respect only. If it be your breeding cockerel, then mate him up with sound-faced hens; if it is a hen that shows the mark of the enemy, then endeavour to mate up with a sound-faced cock. Do not, of course, make up a pen composed of nothing but white faces, as you would simply be breeding up to the defect, but as it is advisable, whenever room can be spared, to make up two pens, such a proceeding can generally be avoided. I have it on the authority of the late Captain Egerton Jones that he found the white-faced hens to be most liable to throw the fault in the progeny, but some time ago Mr Merrall, in conversation, said that he frequently found that good coloured hens, which had good lobes, almost invariably had a tendency to develop the defect, and that he would not throw such out on that account. In 1893 I bred from a cockerel —brother to Mr Merrall's 1892 Palace Cup winner, purchased by Captain Egerton Jones—that developed rather too much white, and in his harem was a hen, almost equally as badly touched as himself, and of the progeny I reared seven cockerels to maturity. Of these, the best coloured bird showed up the fault of his sire, but he had the most perfect comb that I ever saw, or that it will ever be my lot to see, and he was of such a lovely blue ground colour that I reserved him for breeding from. Another cockerel of a darker type also had the fault, but only very slightly, but the other five, without exception, were particularly sound in face. Strange to say, from the cockerel thus selected I also reared seven cockerels, and of these I again had two white-faced ones and five perfectly sound.

The Andalusian cockerels, like all large single-combed varieties, are very subject in severe winters to be troubled with frost bites in the comb. The first signs of this troublesome annoyance is a darkening or bluish tone at the tips of the spikes. If taken in hand at once, and rubbed with a little vaseline, the blood may be got into good circulation again and no harm ensue, but if the frost gets well-established the comb seems to fester, and then it is all up with fertile eggs until you have got him round again.

To avoid any risk of this, I have always made a point before the cold weather sets in of dubbing my breeding cockerels. This is easily done with a pair of sharp scissors. Special dubbing scissors are sold by Messrs Spratt for the purpose, and are rather handier than the ordinary ones. The comb may be cut off within about a quarter of an inch of the skull. The wattles must also be cut off close, cutting each off separately, leaving a narrow strip of skin down between. The wound where the comb was will hardly bleed at all, unless cut very deep, and the wattles only very slightly, so little indeed that I rarely attempt to staunch any flow, but, if necessary, a tuft of downy feathers put on the wound will be quite sufficient. Such a dubbed individual is, of course, of no further use for exhibiting, but for stock purposes he is in good condition all the winter, and there are none of the annoying results that usually follow a severe frost bite. The operation, too, can hardly be considered as a cruel one, as one has only to see a cockerel suffering the agonies of a frost bite once,

and the owner will agree that to prevent such a contingency it is better to be "cruel to be kind."

There is another little matter that is well worth remembering by the breeder who desires early chickens. An extra vigorous cockerel, to be kept up to his duties, must be carefully looked after. At such a time he requires more food in proportion than do the laying hens, whereas such is his gentlemanly forethought for his spouses that he is only too ready to yield up to them all the titbits that are to be got, and go short himself in consequence. I always make a point to get him into a pen by himself for the evening meal and give him as much corn as he can possibly eat. The result last spring was that from one pen I had not a *single unfertile egg*.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHICKS.

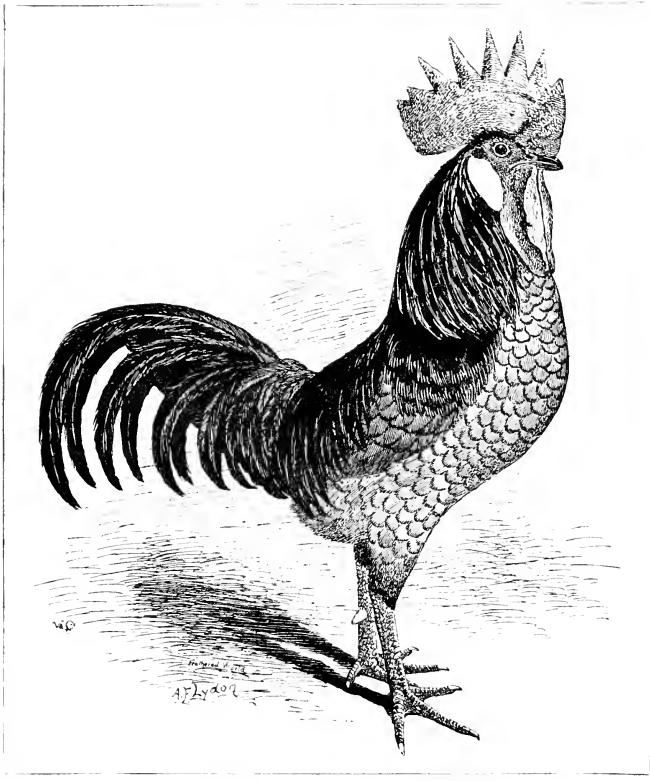
I DO not make any reference here to the sitting hen, as information on that question may be found in any of the numerous works on the subject, nor for the same reason need I enter into matters relating to the early management of the chickens, but skip the intervening time, and presume that the amateur has now got his chicks well grown either from his purchased eggs or else from his own breeding stock.

As a rule, Andalusian chickens will be found remarkably healthy and quick growing, some of them maturing early even in confinement, but it is as well to get them hatched out as early in the month of March as possible, to give them a fair chance for the early shows.

There is one peculiarity about this variety which I have never seen mentioned by any writer, but which must have been noticed by all who have bred the blue. This peculiarity is a tendency among some of the chickens, sometimes as many as 25 to 30 per cent. of them, to feather very slowly. These slow-feathering birds—"dumpies" being the name they generally go by—are nearly always the finest and biggest boned of the clutch. While their sisters and brothers are almost completely clothed with chicken feathers, these peculiar mortals will sometimes be running about with nothing but their flight feathers, even up to two months old, and some of them will even run to four months old before showing the smallest vestige of a tail.

Besides being such fine-looking chickens, these "dumpies" are generally found, when fully feathered, to be of an exceptionally good colour, the lacing coming out particularly distinct. Some of the very greatest winners have been of this type, among others, I believe, the Poultry Club winning pullet, the best ever produced, was one, and Mr Little's challenge cup 1893 cockerel was another. Personally I have generally found them weak in head points, but my experience may be exceptional. It is the opinion of many breeders that such a distinct type of chicken owes its origin to a throw back to some old black Spanish cross, the type of body and head, with the peculiar tardiness of feathering, all pointing in this direction. If it is so, although being so different to the usual run, and labouring under the disadvantage of the slow furnishing, they are a proof that the cross has been of some benefit by their general massiveness and distinctness of lacing.

The only approach I have noticed towards feather eating in my own birds has been due to the temptation these half naked chickens afford to their better clothed brethren to peck them. I have seen



MR F. PORTER'S COCKEREL.

some cases where sores have been formed by this attention, and, of course, when blood appears no self-respecting chick can resist the temptation to annoy its fellows. These sores are usually on the wing bow and at the base of the tail, and, though there are no feathers to eat, I think the cause of it is due to quills charged with blood showing through the transparent skin. It is as well when these sores are found in the flock to put the victims by themselves, to let the wounds harden, and, before putting back among the others, to anoint with a mixture of carbolic ointment and aloes. This nasty mixture usually acts as a deterrent, and, with attention and further application of the mixture when necessary, the chicks will be helped into their full plumage without further danger.

THINNING OUT.—It is almost needless to say that the breeder who hopes to attain any great measure of success must, whatever his advantages as to space, thin out with vigour at every opportunity. With those who have but limited room at command, such action is all the more necessary; but, however much is at one's disposal, and however extensive the range, it is far better to weed the chicks out as young as it can be done with safety, than to let them grow until it seems harder to part with them, while they are all the time taking up room and occupying space that can be much better utilised.

The first thinning out that can be undertaken among Andalusian chickens is to get rid of the blacks and whites. These, or rather the latter, can be distinguished at birth, and, though a downright black one can be picked out at the same time, there are occasionally a few very dark blues that might be mistaken for blacks while so young, and it is just as well to be on the safe side and give such a few days' grace, as when the wing feathers show, the distinction between a dark blue and a black is then more pronounced.

The blacks and whites being thinned out, there is nothing much more can be done until the chicks are from two to three months old. At the latter age there should be no question about the character of the serrations in the combs of the cockerels, and all that are not even in that respect, that show semi or grossly irregular serrations, should be cleared out at once. The combs of the pullets at this age are not advanced at all, neither need they be condemned for irregularity in serration, but given a further chance. Some of the cockerels' combs will also be found to flop over, and of no solidity; these also, if room is scarce, must go. In their earlier stages many combs will lie over through pressure against the maternal breast, but at the age mentioned they should have recovered if they are to be of any use. Before reaching four months old you will be fairly safe in clearing out all that appear hopelessly light, or dark. A saving grace in the lighter ones would be a black or nearly black neck, and a few dark points here and there. In the extra dark ones a feather or two with a light base may be a good sign, and such may be given a chance of showing what they can do as adults. From five to six months old the final stage is reached, as even the laggards will now show of what they are made. First of all, cockerels whose combs are badly

thumb-marked or hopelessly twisted in front must be cleared out, bearing in mind that a slight twist in front may improve, *provided the comb is not fully developed.* A fully developed comb with a twist must be a death warrant.

Birds of either sex showing masses of white in face must also be got rid of, a speck or two of white only being admitted when the bird is about faultless elsewhere, and not even then unless good coloured ones are scarce. Wry and badly squirrel-tailed birds are of very little use, and it is as well to clear them off as soon as detected.

By this rigorous system of early decimation there should come to hand as adults a class of birds that are fairly good all round, leaving you simply to select for show or breeding pen an assortment in shades of colour, size, shape, and style.

Of course, the *severity* of the pruning must be regulated by quality and quantity of the stock generally; a well established strain, if it is of any value at all, being able to stand a much more rigorous treatment than will one of more recent establishment.

It may be objected to, that by clearing off faulty combed cockerels so early I may be destroying birds *simply perfect* in every other respect that have not developed their full beauty; but I hold with the old proverb, that "what the eye never sees the heart never grieves," and it is better to get them out of the way rather than keep a bird that will always be an eyesore at best, and that may not turn out any good for the breeding pen after all, for the reasons that I explained in the chapter on mating. Some chickens will be found to have yellow, or, at any rate, willow legs, and as soon as there is no doubt about the colour, get rid of them; although a slightly tinted leg in a chick of a week or two old will occasionally come out right later on.

I have frequently found that some of the larger and quicker growing chickens are liable, while putting on their adult feathering, to carry sometimes one wing and sometimes both in a very slipshod and ungraceful manner. Instead of holding them well up and showing only the secondaries, they allow the flight feathers to slip down much below their correct position, sometimes almost touching the ground. This appears to be due to some weakness—possibly from in-breeding—and it is well when such occurs to treat the bird with iron in some form or other, giving it stimulating diet, plenty of green food, and a chance of using its wings. The iron I invariably use is carbonate, which, being made up into pills with the admixture of a little flour and water, is always easy to administer. In some bad cases it might be advisable to cut away the primary feathers to ease the weight of the wing, but if the bird is in the adult plumage it is rather a disfigurement. It is very rarely that with proper treatment this annoyance cannot be got rid of, and though I have had two or three cases of it recently, they all got over it with maturity.

In recommending that as soon as the cockerels' combs commence

springing it is advisable to separate the sexes, I am only following a well-beaten path; and as size is of every importance in the Andalusian, it is as well to give them every chance of growing before developing their adult plumage. At the same time I must confess to knowing cases where no separation is effected, and where chicks quite up to the standard size of this variety have been produced.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARING FOR EXHIBITION.

As the last stages of the mature feathering approach, the breeder must give every attention to those of his birds upon which his hopes are based for a successful exhibition season. If the combs of the pullets are noticed to redden before the birds have attained their full growth, it would be as well to change them about from one pen to another every three or four days, and feed them upon such muscle forming foods as will assist their growth, avoiding as far as possible giving too much fat formers. If the fowls can roam over the fields they will generally attain their full growth with sufficient rapidity, provided they are looked after at home in the manner that all fanciers' fowls should be, but, if confined, see that the lack of insect food is made up by a daily supply of some of the many meat foods that are advertised—Liverine or Crissel, for instance, either of which, used judiciously, is of great service at this period of the chickens' career. Being a quick growing variety, it is of great importance that, to get them into birds of a good size for the show pen, they should never suffer from loss of a single meal.

From about eighteen weeks old until the time comes for mating up for the breeding pen it is advisable to abstain from giving the usual soft food *every* morning. One, or at most two, mornings per week will be quite sufficient, unless the weather is more than usually severe. In place of the meal give a variety of sound, wholesome corn, and throw more work upon their gizzards than usual. By so doing the birds can be got into harder plumage, and in better condition for standing the wear and tear of show life, not to speak of a better state of health to fit them for the cares of parentage, which, if they are of much good, will in all probability be expected of them.

In addition to this hardening treatment I adopt a plan which may be carried out with advantage through the greater portion of the year; but in the show season in particular I have found it of great value in bringing into and keeping my birds in condition. As I have stated elsewhere, my runs are only small, and require great care in keeping them sweet and clean. I therefore sow grasses upon them in the early spring for the use of the young chickens; but although I carefully change the broods about from one small run to another while the grass is young, and never let them out upon it in wet weather, the crop is, in spite of every care to preserve it, soon eaten off by the hungry youngsters. When soiled or nearly eaten off I make a second sowing, and a very thick one of oats. About a fortnight after sowing I commence to dig up a few

spadefuls daily, when the grains are just shooting and sending out spider-like rootlets. These the birds devour with avidity with great benefit to themselves; and, as the sprouting of the grain must draw a certain amount of waste animal matter from the ground, a double purpose is served by purifying the ground as well. As the sown patches are cleared of the grain I have another ready for digging up, and this frequent turning over and growth of the grain all tend to keep my runs sweeter than they would be if I let the ground lie idle. I can strongly recommend this plan to all who, like myself, have to depend upon small runs of loose earth and confinement; but, at the same time, if the runs are exceptionally small I should prefer a hard surface, with a loose layer of ashes or gravel, which can be scraped off and replaced with clean material as frequently as possible.

As Andalusian cockerels do not seem so liable as the pullets to get into over-fat condition, they can hardly be over-fed; but as soon as the pullets have got into anything like their full growth, and their combs are freshening, it will be necessary to use some judgment as to the quantity of food to be allowed them. They should be kept rather thin for preference, but, as stinting them before they attain their full age would act as a harmful check, the breeder has to act with discretion. When furnishing, also, many of the cockerels will show a backwardness in the growth of their hackle feathers, a peculiarity that seems inherent in some of the best strains of blues; and, as a fine, full, sweeping hackle is a great attraction in the show pen, the anxiety with which its growth is watched will be well understood.

To hasten the growth of the hackle a little forcing may be indulged in by confining them for a few weeks by themselves, or in couples if they are good friends, in a cockerel box.

It must always be borne in mind that forcing must only be made use of with considerable judgment. A bird with a tendency to white face or unstable comb will stand no forcing at all, whereas a full-blooded, ruddy-cheeked youngster, with hard, firm comb, will stand it with practically no danger if he is well up on his legs and keeps up well to his feed.

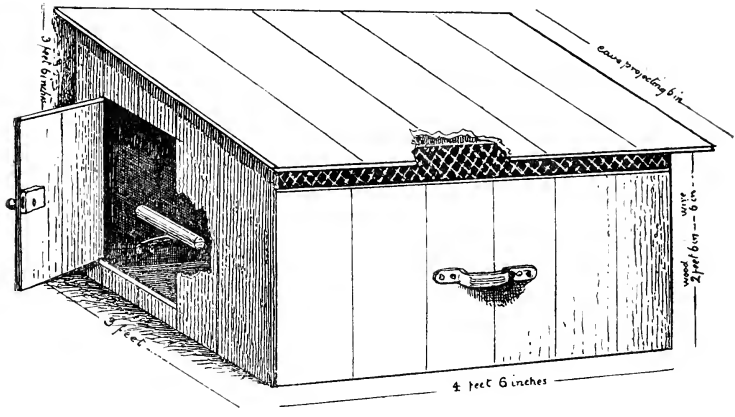
There is this advantage in dealing with cockerels, that they will stand two or three weeks of close confinement, when as many days of simple restraint will sometimes upset the equilibrium of the weaker sex. The principal danger of confining pullets is that there is, by so doing, a risk of their becoming loose in feather, and, as hardness of condition is a point of great importance, it will be seen that every care must be used that forcing is not resorted to needlessly.

I rarely put my birds on much different diet while forcing, although there is no doubt that a little bread soaked in hot milk given fresh each morning will push them on considerably; but it must not be left about to go sour.

Cockerel boxes are built on many different principles, the

majority of them being faulty in one or more important particulars. One of the handiest, cheapest, and most effective I ever came across was on the fields of a well-known Hamburgh breeder, and was simply a strong packing case, with the top sloped to throw off the wet, the bottom knocked away, and a long, narrow opening under the eave.

In the annexed drawing I give an idea of what I consider a perfect cockerel box. It answers the principal requirements for which such pens are wanted, in sheltering the occupant from the effects of sun, rain, and wind, and can be constructed for a very moderate outlay. My own are home made, but any of the leading



COCKEREL BOX.

There is no bottom to the box, and in the sketch the perch is shown too near the door; it should be about 20 in. therefrom.

makers of poultry appliances could turn them out to plan for about 15s. each. As these boxes are made without bottoms it is advisable, if there is a grass run obtainable, to place the box thereon, and by dragging it on to a fresh piece of ground, for which a handle is affixed to each side, there is little danger of the ground becoming tainted. By having the front almost entirely boarded up, with the exception of the 6 in. of wire netting at the top, we have a twofold advantage—the inmate is protected from the weather, and he gets into the habit of standing up straight.

Some kind of covered shed in which a number of preparation pens can be rigged up will be found almost a necessity by the

exhibitor, and, though such pens can be the same sort as are used at exhibitions, it may be more convenient to erect them of a more permanent kind of timber and wire netting. My own are of this character, being built up in two tiers round three sides of the interior of a brick building in which both gas and water are laid on. Such pens are always of great use either for putting the birds in after washing, for confining any that are out of sorts, or even for sitting the hens in in the breeding season.

Some birds seem to be possessed of a remarkable power of keeping themselves in so neat and cleanly a condition that little trouble, if any, need be taken in getting them ready for show, beyond the usual head and leg wash the night before sending off, but with most of them a head wash every night for a week before the show day will help them on very considerably.

Fortunately such washing as the Andalusian requires is not much, simply the comb, face, lobe, and wattles, and the legs and feet. The best way to tackle the bird for washing is to tie the legs firmly with a piece of tape, and, sitting on a low stool, hold the bird lying down on his side with his back towards you, with his legs between your knees and his tail under your left elbow. With the left arm he can then be held in a fairly steady grip, while both hands are at liberty to manage the washing operation.

Have ready placed, within easy reach of the right hand, a bucket containing clean *cold* water, a small piece of sponge, a moderately stiff tooth-brush, a piece of common white soap, and a clean soft linen cloth or towel. Holding the bird's head firmly with the left hand, taking care not to press upon the windpipe, apply the tooth-brush, wetted and well soaped, to the comb, and rub pretty briskly on both sides. The bird at first application will struggle a little, but provided you have got a good grip and do not interfere with its breathing, it will soon learn to lie quiet enough during the operation. After the comb, the face, and then the wattles, must be well treated with the soap and brush, leaving the lobe until afterwards. Do not be afraid to lay on well, as a little brisk friction acts as a tonic upon the blood-vessels of the head, and that alone, even without the wash, would have an improving effect. The soap must then be removed by wiping over with the sponge, and then the head carefully wiped dry with the towel. To clean the lobe it is not advisable, unless it is found exceptionally dirty, to use a brush, as the substance being of a somewhat delicate texture, care has to be taken not to injure the kid-like surface. A thorough sponging with soap and water will generally be found sufficient to clean it, wiping it carefully dry afterwards with the linen cloth, or, better still, with an old silk handkerchief. Should the lobe be cursed with a fold, it may be improved somewhat if, after each wash, it be carefully pulled out, doing this as frequently as possible; and should there be any red stains, creases, or dark lines across it, it is as well (in the preliminary washes only), when thoroughly cleaned, to rub it with a little vaseline, and then dust

over with powdered zinc; leaving it, of course, after the final wash, in its natural state.

The head finished off, before untying the legs apply a *dry* tooth-brush to the hackle, brushing it out thoroughly, and clean away the numerous little feather shields that cling about it, particularly just behind the head.

The legs may be then untied, and, holding the bird firmly by the thighs, with the head under your left arm, dip the shanks up to the knee in the bucket of water. A vigorous rubbing with the free hand and the application of a little soap will soon get rid of the dirt, and, after rubbing the legs *nearly* dry again, put a little vaseline upon each, and rub this well into the scales, and then wipe off and dry thoroughly.

It is always as well after the evening wash to keep the birds in an indoor pen all night, and turn the cockerels into their pens next morning and the pullets into the open run. If the nights are more than usually cold, and freezing hard, it may be better to wash less frequently, unless the room you can leave them in for the night is kept moderately warm; as I remember an occasion on which I washed a bird the night before a show, and when after a freezing night I went to pack her up, I found her down with cramp and had to send off a substitute. It happened some years ago, but it gave me a practical lesson that I have not forgotten yet.

Confinement in the cockerel box will have a bleaching effect upon the lobes, and will force the comb of the cockerel all that may at any time be required, but it must not be forgotten that too close a confinement is very liable to cause the thinner combs to lop; at the same time I may mention that the combs in the male sex are very often found to spring *too soon*, and such precocious youngsters rarely fill out and make the giant specimens that some of their more backward brothers will. Confinement will also have a forcing effect upon the pullets, but to avoid confining the pullets too much the comb may be sufficiently forced by manipulating it between the finger and thumb. It is astonishing the effect that can be got out of a slow growing comb by two or three days' care and management, but when there is plenty of time there is no ultimate advantage to be gained by hurrying Nature on too fast.

Many birds, through a want of vigour, are liable when confined in the cockerel box to become very pale in the comb and face. When such occurs they must at once be turned out into their ordinary run, and with a little flesh meat added to their food, and a suitable tonic given to them, may be soon got into condition again. In aggravated cases, Mr Cobb has recommended that a daily dose (in their drinking water) of from five to tens drops of colchicum wine will have a beneficial effect. I cannot speak as to the result from experience, but as the action of the drug is to increase the pulsation of the heart, it may serve a useful purpose, provided it be not persevered in too long.

When the comb of the cockerel goes over, it can, if taken in

hand at once, be in many cases brought upright again by daily manipulating it in the contrary direction to the fall, and I have had much more success by so doing than by bothering with the objectionable comb guards that are recommended for the purpose of supporting a "wobbler." To *keep* the comb upright, and the face sound, there is nothing like letting the bird stand a certain amount of exposure, and not letting it roost in too warm a house; but as exposure will sometimes ruin the lobe and discolour the plumage, therein lies one of the chief reasons why the personal care of the owner is important.

The frequent washing to which a bird gets subject will in itself usually tame a bird considerably, but as many youngsters are liable to get frightened and fly about in their pen when at the show, it is very necessary that they should undergo a certain amount of pen training. To do this it is only needful to confine them in a show pen or its substitute for an hour or two a day for two or three days before the show takes place, and while penned up stir them about gently with a stick blunted at the end. After their first show no further training will be required, but on no account overlook this very necessary treatment with novices, as no judge can be expected to look with favour upon a bird, be it ever so full of quality, if it is too wild in the pen to give him a chance to see it fairly.

Before despatching the birds to their destination, see that they have a good feed of sound corn, wheat, or barley, and that clean water is within their reach to give them an opportunity of quenching their thirst. After their feed it is sometimes as well (if the birds are despatched on the morning of the show, not otherwise) to rub the comb, face, and wattle with a mixture of olive oil and vinegar, well shaken up together, applied with a sponge, but do not leave the surface too wet. Many exhibitors who attend with their birds personally at the shows give the heads of their birds a rub over just previous to judging, a practice which, though perfectly honest, is one that I question if it ought to be allowed, as it gives certain dealer exhibitors a preference over many who are strictly amateurs, and who have not the opportunity of running all over the country with their birds.

Another advantage that such personal attendance reaps is that many summer shows are still held in which the poultry pens are staged out in the open, and the occupant exposed to all weathers. The owners who travel about with their birds, when they find them staged in this way, can arrange to put some slight covering over their own pens, and thus on a wet day their exhibits look in better condition than such forsaken specimens of hendom as have no owner present and that have to take their chance of the weather.

It is usually recommended, when classes are given for birds in pairs—cockerel and pullet—to let the two be penned up together for a day or two before the show, to get used to each other; but as I have had personal experience of the frightful and almost irreparable

damage that a vigorous young cockerel can do to his pen mate in that day or two, my advice is, *do not enter* at such shows.

In selecting the bird you intend to exhibit a much greater measure of success will result when you get to know the peculiar fancy of the different judges. While giving all these gentlemen every credit for honesty of purpose and for ability enough to do justice to the breed, it is a well-known fact that a bird that will win frequently under one judge may never even get a card under another. Some men seem to allot more value to good head points, some to ground colour and lacing, some to hackle, some to size and shape, and, in fact, though many may judge upon very similar lines, I believe all differ in a slight degree in their valuation of the different points. Thus it is by the experience which only frequent exhibiting can bring the fancier will in time know what type of bird to send under each judge, and there is no royal road to the knowledge of this. Each has got to find it out for himself, experience bringing the wisdom.

Above all things, however, do not be too hard upon your own stock. A faultless bird is about *non est*, so that if your own has one or two faults that trouble you, you may be equally certain that whatever it is destined to be shown against is just as likely to be faulty also, and it may be that your own bird may look the more glaringly faulty from the fact that you have had it before you for months, whereas the judge may not have as many minutes in which to examine it, and what to you may be patent may to him be totally invisible.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE often wondered wherein lies the subtle fascination that influences the true fancier, and helps him bear up against the constant disappointments that so surely beset his path. It cannot be *altogether* the hope of bearing off the blue ribbon of the exhibition world, or even the winning of the first prize at any of the numerous shows that are now held. It is certainly satisfactory to think that such success may occasionally crown our efforts, but this is simply the sordid goal that animates the competitive instincts of the big exhibiting dealers—fanciers falsely so called. In breeding black Hamburghs I have known no more exquisite feeling of pleasure than in seeing the true beetle green creeping from beneath the dusky-hued feathers of the earlier chicken existence, and in the hopes and fears that the growing green would be of the true glorious lustre, or ruined by the fatal mazarine, lay the real allurement of the fancier.

Those who are breeders of the blue will well understand my meaning. As the chickens reach the older stage, and the mature feathers begin to peep out from beneath the smoky covering with which they are adorned in chickenhood, know you not that peculiar feeling of intense delight, not unmixed with anxiety, that animates you as each morning you glance around the flock to note the hoped-for improvement or confirm the dreaded disappointment?

Such happy influences as these may be enjoyed by breeders of many other varieties, but, with one or two exceptions, I think to a less extent. Where colour is only a secondary consideration, and head points of primary importance, the alteration is of such slow growth that the mind is not kept in that pleasurable condition of being on the tenterhooks of hope, and there are certain coloured varieties the evolution of whose clothing is of so certain and sedate a growth that they almost forbid undue excitement; but the blue is of that peculiar nature that one hardly knows what a day may bring forth, and therein lies the pleasure.

I am beginning to think that the fancier, like the poet, is born, and not made. A successful exhibitor may late in life enter the arena, and his career as such may be a lengthy one, and perhaps end only with life, but I am under the impression that he just lacks the one touch of Nature that makes the whole fancier world akin.

In drawing these articles to a close, I feel that some kind of apology may be necessary for certain apparent omissions that it may be considered I have made.

It will be noticed that I have refrained from going very deeply

into, and, in fact, have barely touched upon, such questions as housing, feeding, rearing, diseases, etc.; but I beg indulgence, as I am of opinion that such questions would be rather out of place in a monograph upon any one of the fancy varieties of poultry.

What I have written can hardly claim to be of interest to any but the fancier properly so called. To those who keep the Andalusian simply for its economical properties, although I hold that it is a variety that to such is calculated to give every satisfaction, I do not suppose that any description of its points of perfection and the means by which such may be produced will be of very profound interest.

Such side issues as commencing a strain, preparation for exhibition, etc., although what is here written may be applied to almost every variety, they are so distinct from anything that may strictly relate to utility breeding that I think no apology is necessary for their being introduced and dwelt upon in a rather lengthy manner in proportion to the space at my disposal. This being so, I may be pardoned if I suggest that those readers who are wishful for reliable information upon those questions that I have purposely omitted, should refer to any of the numerous works that have been published upon those branches of the subject more particularly.

I am not aware that in any one of these matters the Andalusian requires any different treatment than does the veriest mongrel, to bring to the perfection of health and profit production, and as treatment upon all such points is more a case of individual fancy than anything else, I thus beg to clear myself from any risk of being ranked as a faddist.

To the searching criticism of the experienced fancier I, therefore, tender those pages, and trust that whatever their faults, they may be of some use, if not to my critics, at anyrate to the amateur who is desirous of entering the ranks of the exhibitors; and if what is here set down will help him to obtain a successful position, and to maintain that position when obtained, I think the work will not have been published in vain.

APPENDIX.

INTRODUCTION.

"SILVER DUN" has suggested that the following "Ideal Standards," by well-known Andalusian breeders, which I have collected, and am proud to possess, should be published in conjunction with his series of articles which appeared in *The Feathered World*. I have much pleasure therefore in lending this valuable collection of opinions for that purpose, as I consider it would be a pity to keep from the public what must be of as great interest to them as to myself.

I believe I have asked the consent of each of the gentlemen and ladies who so kindly contributed to allow the publication of their individual articles, but should I have omitted to do so in any particular instance, I trust it will not be considered a breach of confidence.

T. EGERTON JONES.

The Standard, etc., of the Andalusian Club.

COLOUR OF COCK AND HEN.—*Beak.*—Dark horn colour. *Eye.*—Bright orange or red. *Comb, Wattles, and Face.*—Brilliant red. *Deaf ears.*—Pure opaque white. *Legs.*—Dark leaden blue. *Breast.*—A deep blue. *Plumage.*—A deep slate blue, with a lacing of darker colour, or even black, on each feather is preferable; and, in cock, hackle, saddle, and sickle should be black or deep purple, with a rich gloss.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.—COCK: *Head.*—General appearance, large and deep. *Beak.*—Rather long, but not thin. *Comb.*—Medium and single, perfectly straight and upright, and deeply serrated. *Wattles.*—Very long, fine, thin in texture. *Face.*—Fine in quality, bare of feathers, and free from white. *Deaf ears.*—Medium, smooth, flat, fitting close to head, and free from wrinkles. *Neck.*—Long, carried well back, with flowing hackle. *Body.*—General appearance light, active, broad at shoulders, tapering to the tail. *Back.*—Rather round, and slanting to tail. *Wings.*—Long, but carried tightly to the body, the long back feathers coming well over the points. *Breast.*—Rounded, and carried well forward. *Legs and Feet.*—Rather long, free from feathers, and toes thin. *Tail.*—Sickles arched, and carried well up, but not squirrel fashion. *Size.*—Large. *Carriage.*—Very upright and strutting.

HEN.—General characteristics resembling cock, with the usual sexual differences, except that the comb falls over to one side.

DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Face not red; Dorking combed; five toed on either foot; legs other colour than blue; red, yellow, or white feathers anywhere.

VALUE OF DEFECTS IN JUDGING ANDALUSIANS.

Bad shaped comb	... ...	10	Faults in colour 20
Ear lobe folded or wrinkled	...	5	Want of size 10
Stain of red on lobe	... ...	5	Want of symmetry 15
Want of hackle	... ...	8	Want of condition 12
Squirrel tail	... ...	15	100

The number of points to be deducted for each defect must be left to the discretion of the judge.

BY MR L. C. VERREY.

DEDUCTIONS.

General characteristics on the same lines as the Standard of the Club, but does not mention black hackles for the cock. Speaks strongly in support of the importance of size.

Cock.		*Hen.*	
Comb too large or too small ...	6	Comb too small	6
Comb badly shaped, thumb marked or side sprigged ...	6	Comb side sprigged	6
Ear lobe folded or wrinkled ...	6	Comb double folded	6
Red stains on lobe	6	Ear lobe wrinkled or puckered	6
White spots or specks in face ...	15	Ear lobe, red stains on ...	6
Want of hackle	6	Irregular markings on breast ...	15
Red, brown, or gold feathers in hackle	10	White spots or specks in face...	15
Want of or uneven markings in breast	10	Want of condition	10
Want of condition	10	Want of symmetry	15
Want of symmetry	10	Want of size	15
Want of size	15		
	100		100

COCK.—*Disqualifications:* Ear lobes quite red; yellow, red, or white feathers anywhere; legs any other colour than blue. HEN.—*Disqualifications:* Comb erect; ear lobes quite red; yellow, red, or white feathers anywhere; legs any other colour than blue.

BY REV. R. T. THORNTON.

Head.—Comb rather above medium size, following the curve of the neck, but leaving a space between. If it *rises* from the base I consider it a very bad fault. It should have five or six deep serrations, be free from "sprigs," erect and straight in cocks, falling in a graceful curve in hens. *Eyes* a brownish red. *Face* a brilliant red. *Lobes* pure white, as smooth and flat as possible, not too narrow, but the top broader than the base; they should be filbert rather than almond shaped. *Wattles* long.

Shape and Style.—Not quite so heavy in build as the Minorca, and quite free from "dumpiness." *Thighs* moderately long. *Hackles* as full as possible, so as to present an unbroken curve from the base of the comb to the base of the tail. *Tail* carried rather back, especially in pullets, in which it should be tapering rather than fan shaped. *Size* should be aimed at, but not at the expense of type.

Colour.—*The top colour* of cocks should be a brilliant glossy black; *the ground colour* very even and of medium blue (washiness or sootiness to be avoided); *breast lacing* sharp and narrow, extending on to thighs and fluff, and, if possible, clear up to the throat. *The sickles* should be very long and dark, the rest of the tail of the same colour as the general ground colour. *Colour of hen* similar to cock, but well laced all over, even to tips of tail and wing feathers. *Hackle* laced in hens, but not in cocks. *Legs* blue or black, the former preferable.

Serious Defects.—White in face of cockerels or pullets; red lobes; grey hackle in cocks.

Disqualifications.—Dorking comb or feet; rusty hackle and saddle; squirrel tail; white in tail; an erect comb in hen.

It will be noticed that I have not drawn out a scale of points, believing that most systems in practical working must be unsatisfactory. Roughly speaking, I would say:—Head, 35; condition, 15; shape and style, 15; colour and density of plumage, 15; lacing, 20; total, 100.

By Mr ROBERT LITTLE, Junior.

Head.—General appearance large and deep, with stout beak rather long, dark horn colour. *Eye.*—Brownish red, with plenty of fire in it. *Face.*—Brilliant red, free from white. *Lobes.*—Almond shaped, medium size, pure white with plenty of substance, smooth and free from wrinkles. *Comb.*—Rather above medium size, five or six spikes, evenly serrated, following the curve of the neck, but not to touch the neck, straight, with plenty of substance at base, free from side sprigs (meaty or thumb-marked combs to be avoided). A comb that rises from base is, in my opinion, a great fault. *Wattles.*—Long, thin, and without folds. *Neck.*—Long, carried well back, with long flowing hackle. *Shape.*—General appearance active, broad at shoulders, tapering to the tail. *Size.*—Very important, the larger the better. *Back.*—Rather round, wings carried tightly up. *Leg and Thighs.*—Long. Thighs round. Colour of legs and toes dark leaden or black, toes long and moderately thin. *Tail.*—Sickles and secondary or small sickles, *black;* this is important, as the sickles should match the hackle and back; secondary tail feathers blue, to match the cock's breast. *Colour.*—Hackle, back, and sickles of a velvety shining black. *Breast.*—Blue, the medium shade; well and distinctly laced with black; the ground colour of the cock's breast should be, in my opinion, the same medium blue that is so much desired in the hens, and not the light-breasted birds admired by some. If we had the cock's breast to harmonise with the medium colour of the hen, the great difficulty of breeding true to colour would, I think, then be nearly overcome. *Carriage.*—Very upright and strutting.

Hen.—*Head.*—Large and deep. *Comb.*—Falling gracefully over, medium size, well serrated. *Hackle.*—Dark or black is preferable. *Legs.*—Dark leaden or black. *Shape.*—Smart, erect, and stylish, tail not carried too high, close and compact, not fan tailed. *Size.*—The larger the better.

Serious Defects.—White in face in cockerels or pullets. Red lobes. Grey ticked hackles. Black and white wing bows in cocks. Blue sickles. Black secondaries.

Disqualifications.—Dorking comb or feet. Rusty hackle and saddle, wry or squirrel tail, white in tail. Crooked legs or feet. An erect comb in hens.

I have not drawn out a scale of points, as it is, in my opinion, of little use when not used for judging. To sum up, I would say:—Head, 30; condition, 15; distinct ground colour and density of hackles, 15; lacing, 15; shape, 10; size, 15—100 points to the bird.

By Mr THOMAS LAMBERT.

I have penned what I consider the nearest approach to the ideal Andalusian which, in practice, has always been my aim to reach. The value of deductions, from a breeder's standpoint, is put down in the aggregate, as, in my opinion, it rests with the discretion of the judge what number of points may or should be deducted under each heading.

The Standard says for ground colour "deep slate blue." I think this hardly meets the views of Andalusian breeders generally, therefore it will be noted I have allowed in the foregoing a little latitude for colour; at the present stage, I think it would be better not to draw a hard and fast line upon this point.

Symmetry and Size of Cock.—Length of leg and neck in harmony with the size of body, which should be as large as possible, thus giving a light and alert appearance.

Shape.—Breast full and round, back long, wide at the shoulders, and tapering slightly downwards to the tail.

Top Colour.—The neck hackle, back and saddle hackle, an unbroken lustrous black, covering well the shoulders and wing bow.

Ground Colour and Lacing.—Even and clear, with an uniform shade from throat to fluff, which may vary from light to dark bright blue. Showing distinctly a sharp, well defined lacing of black around the edge of each feather to the thighs if possible.

Tail.—To match the breast in colour; well furnished with somewhat darker coloured sickles, or even black, the top sickle carried well over the points of tail feathers.

Wing.—Wing bar and flights to match in colour with breast and tail.

Head.—Comb firm and straight, medium in size, with five or six deep serrations, following in a graceful curve the line of the head and neck, but not too low, being quite clear from the hackle.

Face.—Coral red, free from feathers, or white in any degree.

Ear Lobe.—Pure white, medium size, pendulous in shape, of good substance, smooth in texture, and free from folds or tucks, and fitting close up to face.

Wattles.—Long, and fine in texture.

Legs.—Deep slate, light blue or black admissible.

Hen:—Size.—Large as possible, consistent with a graceful carriage.

Ground Colour and Lacing.—As in cock, except that the hackle feathers extending over the shoulders should, if possible, be broadly laced or black, evenness of colour and lacing to be the cardinal point.

Head.—Rather large in comb, well serrated, falling on one side, as in Minorcas.

Deductions.

Cock.		*Hen.*	
Want of symmetry	10	Want of size...	10
Want of size...	10	Uneven in colour	15
Defective colour	20	Defective lacing	15
Absence of lacing	10	Sooty breast	10
Faults in comb	10	Badly formed comb... ...	10
Stained ear lobes	5	Ear lobe folded	5
Folded or tucked lobes ...	5	Ear lobe stained	5
Want of hackles	10	Face not red, or white spots	15
Out of condition	10	Out of condition	10
Legs pink or flesh colour ...	5	Legs other than blue, slate, or black	5
Toes not straight	5		
	100		100

Cock :—*Serious Defects.*—Sprig or falling comb, rusty hackles, red or white feathers, white face, red lobes, squirrel tailed, in-kneed, or any deformity. *Disqualifications.*—Trimmed combs, stained legs, plucked or dyed feathers, or other fraudulent tampering. Hen :—*Serious Defects.*—White, red, or black feathers anywhere (except neck); comb erect; high tail; plumage any other colour but blue or dark blue. *Disqualifications.*—Any deformity, dyed legs, plucked feathers, or other fraudulent tampering.

By Mr EDWIN MERRALL.

The following remarks are intended to point out, in my opinion, the points I have found most difficult to obtain, and which are not esteemed of sufficient value in the judging lately seen; and first in order I should put size and shape, so as to keep the breed what it is, and not reduced to Hamburghs.

Cockerel.—*Size and shape.*—Long in leg and thigh, large breast, full and round, and long graceful neck. *Colour.*—Neck and top glossy black, breast and thighs *light* silver blue, with distinct black lacings, the wing feathers with only darker ground colour; tail, the top sickles black, remainder shading down to light blue, to be well furnished, and not carried high. *Face, etc.*—Face to be bright cherry red, ear lobes pure white, smooth and full, comb medium size, firm, and to slightly follow the curve of the head.

Pullet.—*Size and shape.*—Long in leg and thigh, body large, long neck and erect head, tail carried low, and not fan shaped. *Colour.*—Commencing jet black at top of neck, and gradually tapering down to *light* silver blue, even ground colour, and laced with a black edging distinct and evenly over breast, body, wings, tail, and back. *Comb.*—Medium size, gracefully falling on one side, but not so as to blind the bird on that side, and, above all, avoid great ugly combs one sees so often now. Ear lobes large, white and smooth, with a pure red face.

By Mr H. ABBOT.

The following are what I consider the chief points which an ideal Blue Andalusian should possess:—

Cock.—*Colour.*—Neck and top colour rich glossy black or deep purple, with not the slightest tinge of brown or rust; breast and thighs light blue or slate colour, each feather being distinctly laced with black; the wing ends or flights should be same colour as breast. Sickle feathers in tail a dark blue or nearly black to correspond with top colour, other feathers in tail to correspond as near as possible with breast colour. *Size and shape.*—Larger in size the better, long in shanks and thighs, and standing well up on same, deep and well rounded breast, tail to be full and carried well up, but must not be squirrel tailed. *Head* should be large and deep, with a medium sized single comb, with four to six serrations, and free from side sprigs. *Beak* black or very dark horn colour. *Eyes* reddish brown. *Wattles* long and pendulant. *Face* red and free from white spots. *Lobes* perfectly white, correct almond shape, medium size, free from wrinkles or folds. *Legs* should be black, or very dark slate colour.

Hen.—Should be large, and well shaped, same colour all through as breast of cock, except that the neck hackle should be nearly black, comb of medium size, falling over to either side, so as not to interfere with the sight.

DEDUCTIONS.

Cock.		*Hen.*	
Short of size	15	Short of size	15
Bad colour and lacing	20	Bad colour and lacing	20
Bad shape	10	Bad shape	10
Lobes folded or stained ...	10	Lobes folded or stained ...	10
Bad comb	10	Bad comb	10
White in face	15	White in face	15
Squirrel tailed	10	Squirrel tailed	10
Want of symmetry	10	Want of symmetry	10
	100		100

BY MR F. PORTER.

COCKEREL.—Good average size. Comb very upright and evenly serrated, free from sprigs on side. Comb, face, and wattles brilliant red. Deaf ears, pure white, free from wrinkles. Hackle and saddle dark purple or black. Breast clear blue ground colour, each feather edged with deeper colour. Clear blue legs.

PULLET.—Clear blue ground, well laced and uniform, pure white lobes, red face. Comb lying nicely over. Clear blue legs. Ground colour to be good medium blue.

MR D. BUTTERFIELD

Writes as follows:—With regard to Andalusians, there are so many different opinions that it would take a long time to impress all blue fanciers with the true ideal, so long as they are successful at the shows, and the so-called "Blue Judges" are allowed to follow their own inclinations; and it is time true fanciers used their influence to save this noble breed, and stamped out the Minorca style. I do not object to dark, heavily-laced birds, providing the ground colour is not of that "sooty" shade. My ideal is, the cock should be large in size, well laced breast, clear ground colour, must have a clear red face, dense black hackle and saddle; tail either light or dark coloured; comb firm, and evenly serrated; lobes white, and fair sized, fitting close to face, free from wrinkles, folds, or stains.

HEN.—Should be large, and well laced all over on a clear ground colour; legs of a blue shade, standing well up after the same type; comb large in proportion to the bird, and to fall over on one side, free from twists in front; lobes white, large, and fitting close to face, free from specks.

BY THE LATE CAPTAIN EGERTON JONES.

COCK.—*Size and shape.*—As large as possible consistent with symmetry, with long shanks and thighs; breast, full and round; back wide, with rounded shoulders, tapering to tail, which should be rather depressed and not fan shaped. *Colour.*—Hackles, dense lustrous black, resting well down on shoulders, so that when standing erect the whole back appears one unbroken surface of black colour. Breast, clear light silver blue, each feather edged with sharp (not too narrow) black lacings reaching to thighs and fluff. Tail same colour as breast, with sickles darker, or even black, top sickle feather lower than top tail feather; wing same shade as breast, with each feather laced with black. *Legs.*—Dark slate colour. *Head,*

Comb, Face, Lobes, etc.—Head moderate size, comb slightly following curve of neck, straight, firm, broad at base, with from four to six serrations deeply cut, no side sprigs nor thumb marks; lobes fair size, pure white, smooth, rather round than almond shape; eyes reddish brown (not orange colour); face brilliant red, free from white; wattles long, without folds.

HEN.—*Size and shape.*—Large as possible, with rounded breast. Tail carried rather low, and slightly compressed. *Colour and lacings.*—Same as breast of cock—viz., light silver blue, with perfectly black lacings (not too fine), all over to end of tail if possible, with exception of glossy black hackle at top, ending in laced feathers on shoulder. *Head points.*—Head fair size, with rather large comb rising straight from bill, and falling over one side, with deeply cut serrations. *Face, lobes, and legs.*—Same as cock.

DEFECTS.—White in face, red lobes. High tail, white feathers.* Grey hackle in cock or comb over, or erect comb in hen, or sooty ground colour in either.

DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Red feathers, rusty hackle or saddle, more than four toes to each foot, feathers on legs, etc.

With regard to scale of points I have omitted to define in detail, but differ greatly from the present standard, I would, roughly speaking, say

Colour and lacings	50
Shape and size	15
General carriage, etc.	10
Defective head points, hackle, condition, etc. ...	25
	100

GENERAL REMARKS.—In making the foregoing remarks I have endeavoured to convey my ideas of what we should aim at in carrying to further perfection the "Andalusian of the future," which, although it has of late greatly improved in many respects, still lacks the general shape and carriage. I incline rather to the "Spanish" than to the "Minorca" type, and also especially the clear light *silver blue* ground colour, with perfectly black lacings, and which I hope to see the accepted standard. Such specimens have already been produced, and by careful selection, and proper skill in mating, these points can gradually be permanently secured, as surely as the steady perseverance of Sir John Sebright produced the Bantam of his ideal fancy.

BY MR FRANCIS W. BAKER.

Judging the Andalusian from my own ideal, I should first of all look for silver blue ground colour, as light a blue as possible, and deep blue or black sharply-defined lacing, and this under a deep rich black hackle and saddle in the cock, and laced hackle in the hen. Legs blue, not black.

Next in order, I should demand size and shape. Long on the leg, with massive and prominent thighs, prominent breast, head carried well back, tail carried rather low and compactly. Plenty of bulk and weight, and yet alert in carriage.

And, lastly, I should place the head points of the breed.

Comb not too large, with few rather than too many spikes, straight up in front, free from twist or thumb mark, and not too low behind.

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*I think it is worth noting that I have in my possession a letter written by the late Captain Egerton Jones, in which he states that he is quite at one with me in my contention that it would be a very unwise proceeding to disqualify for an occasional white feather (except in tail), as such would simply result in the encouragement of plucking.—"SILVER DUN."

Face sound red, a spot or two of white a blemish, but not a disqualification.

Lobes rather long and narrow, thin and smooth, pure opaque white.

DEDUCTIONS.

Roughly—

	Points.		Points.
Faults in comb ...	... 10	Faults in lacing ...	... 30
,, face	... 12	,, shape, style, condition	10
,, lobe	... 3	Want of size	... 15
,, ground colour	... 20	Total	...100

As for disqualifications I agree *in the main* with the Club, with the exception of white in face. This I should look upon as a serious and not a fatal defect. My reasons for this are that colour being in my estimation the most important point, I should prefer that any weakness here must be treated with greater severity than faults anywhere else, and that until colour is more firmly established it will be necessary to treat a faulty face with greater leniency.

BY REV. J. H. B. WOLLOCOMBE.

I give briefly my feeling on the following points:—

COCK.—*Comb.*—Moderate size, which will never go over, and not too near the neck. *Hackle, Back, and Saddle.*—Rich mantle of purplish black, green tinge in saddle feathers to be avoided. *Sickles.*—Dark or black. *Ground Colour of Body, Wings, and Tail.*—Clear blue throughout, light, but not pale. *Lacing.*—Bold, round, well defined, and preferably on every blue feather. *Size and shape.*—Large and tall, but not overgrown looking and clumsy. The bird should have a light, active appearance. *Legs.*—Blue, not black or too dark, especially in light-coloured birds.

HEN.—Clear blue, well laced all over, up to the small black feathers of the neck; good size, but active; high carriage, low tail, comb neat rather than large, general appearance smart and stylish.

SERIOUS DEFECTS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS.—Under the latter head I should put only those faults that are bound to disqualify, placing other faults under the head of "serious defects." These would practically disqualify in keen competition, but would allow a good bird which had one of them slightly to win in a less good class, without (as is now the case) going contrary to the standard, and confusing beginners.

BY MRS BLACKET GILL.

COCK.—*Size and shape.*—As large as possible, long in leg, the breast well carried forward, the tail up, but not squirrel shaped, and the primary feathers compressed. *Head.*—Comb a moderate size, quite erect, with five or six serrations equally divided; face cherry red, with not a sign of white round the eye; the lobe pure white, smooth and almond shaped; the wattles long. *Colour.*—Hackle and saddle jet black from back of head to base of tail; breast, wings, thighs, and fluff to be greyish blue, with broad lacing of black; the feathers on breast to be pointed rather than round. Ticked or spangled feathers a serious defect; legs, lead colour.

HEN.—*Size and shape.*—As large as possible, tail carried rather low, and tapering (not fan shaped). *Head.*—Comb large, the serrations long, free from sprigs, and falling over on one side. *Colour.*—Greyish blue, laced all

over, including wings and tail; the lacing pointed if possible. *Face, Lobes, and Legs.*—To be the same as cock.

Remarks.—Having given my opinion of what an ideal Andalusian should be, I will only add that I think there is some danger of show specimens becoming too dark. Doubtless dark birds must be used in the breeding pen, but I think they should not be exhibited. I would also like to draw attention to the importance of selecting the stock cock or cockerel with very distinct lacing on the back, under the hackle and saddle as well as on the breast, as there is little doubt that this will tend to produce pullets with well defined lacing, this latter point being, in my opinion, the first to be considered in the ideal Andalusian.

By Mr THOMAS SAUNDERS.

Cock.—*Shape.*—To resemble the Spanish as much as possible. *Comb.*—Firm and straight, of fair size, following the curve of the head, but being quite clear from the hackle. *Colour.*—Neck and back dense glossy black, breast and thighs medium shade of blue, heavily laced with black.

Hen.—*Shape.*—To resemble the Spanish as much as possible, the tail to be carried low and tightly compressed. *Colour.*—Hackle glossy black, body and breast medium shade of blue, heavily laced. *Comb.*—Medium size, of fine quality.

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